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THE LIFE AND WORKS

OF

GOETHE:

WITH

SKETCHES OF HIS AGE AND CONTEMPORARIES,

FROM

Published and Unpublished Sources.

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BY

G. H. LEWES,

AUTHOR OF "THE BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY", ETC.

"Goethe's heart, which few knew, was as great as his intellect, which all knew."—JUNG STILLING.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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BOOK THE FIFTH.

CRYSTALS.

1779 to 1793.

" Wenn sich der Most auch ganz absurd gebärdet,
Es giebt zuletzt doch noch 'n Wein."

" Von jener Macht, die alle Wesen bindet
Befreit der Mensch sich der sich überwindet."

" Postquam me experientia docuit, omnia, quæ in communi vita frequenter occurrunt, vana et futilia esse; quum viderem omnia, a quibus et quæ timebam, nihil neque boni neque mali in se habere, nisi quatenus ab iis animus movebatur: constitui tandem inquirere, an aliquid daretur quod verum bonum et sui communicabile esset, et a quo solo rejectis ceteris omnibus animus afficeretur; imo an aliquid daretur, quo invento et acquisito continua ac summa in æternum fuerer lætitia."

SPINOSA.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

NEW-BIRTH.

THE changes slowly operating the evolution of character, as from the lawlessness of Youth it passes into the clear stability of Manhood, resemble the evolution of harmony in the tuning of an orchestra, as from stormy discords wandering in pursuit of concord, all the instruments gradually subside into the true key: round a small centre the hurrying sounds revolve, one by one falling into that centre and increasing its circle, at first slowly, and afterwards with ever-accelerated velocity, till the victorious concord emerges from the tumult. Or they may be likened to the gathering splendour of the dawn, as at first slowly, and afterwards with silent velocity, it drives the sullen darkness to the rear, and with a tidal sweep of light takes tranquil possession of the sky. By images such as these we may express the dawn of a new epoch in Goethe's life. He is now entering a period when the wanderings of an excitable nature are gradually falling more and more within the circle of law; when aims, before vague, now become clear; when in the recesses of his mind much that was fluent becomes crystallized by earnestness which gives a definite purpose to life. All men

of genius go through this change of crystallization. Their youths are disturbed by the turbulence of errors and of passions. But if they outlive these errors they turn them into advantages. Just as the sides of great mountain ridges are rent by fissures filled with molten rock, which fissures, when the lava cools, act like vast supporting ribs strengthening the mountain mass, so, in men of genius, passions first rend, and afterwards buttress Life. The diamond, it is said, can only be polished by its own dust; is not this symbolical of the truth that only by its own fallings-off can genius properly be taught? And is not our very walk, as Goethe says, a series of falls?

"Men of genius," says F. von Müller, "are prone to wander beyond the boundaries of reality. In their endeavours to find new and stimulant food for the sensibility, they often disdain the narrow limits of social order; and devoted with one-sided exclusiveness to the ideal, neglect the study of the actual world and of the obligations it imposes. In Goethe, on the contrary, we find from his earliest youth two usually conflicting qualities intimately allied;—a boundless productiveness of fancy and a childlike feeling for nature, which saw life in everything, and everywhere strove to take active part in life. This indestructible love of nature and practical action winds through the whole course of his life; it sharpened his eye for every external phenomenon; led the often restless activity of his spirit to the Real; formed the counterpoise and the remedy of his passions; and like a protecting genius preserved him amid perilous labyrinths from error, and amid romantic adventures from being mastered by a romantic temperament."

He was now (1779) entering his thirtieth year. Life slowly emerged from the visionary mists through which hitherto it had been seen; the solemn earnestness of Manhood took the place of the vanishing thoughtlessness of Youth, and gave a

more commanding unity to his existence. He had "resolved to deal with Life no longer by halves, but to work it out in its totality, beauty, and goodness—*vom Halben zu entwöhnen, und im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen resolut zu leben.*" It is usually said that the residence in Italy was the cause of this change; but the cause lay in the necessary development of his genius. The slightest acquaintance with the period we are now considering suffices to prove that long before he went to Italy the change had taken place. An entry in his Diary at this date is very significant. "Put my things in order, looked through my papers, and burnt all the old chips. Other times, other cares! Calm retrospect of Life, and the extravagances, impulses, and eager desires of youth; how they seek satisfaction in all directions. How I have found delight, especially in mysteries, in dark imaginative connections; how I only half seized hold of Science, and then let it slip; how a sort of modest self-complacency runs through all I wrote; how short-sighted I was in divine and human things; how many days wasted in sentiments and shadowy passions; how little good I have drawn from them, and now the half of life is over, I find myself advanced no step on my way, but stand here as one who, escaped from the waves, begins to dry himself in the sun. The period in which I have mingled with the world since October 1775, I dare not yet trust myself to look at. God help me further, and give me light, that I may not so much stand in my own way, but see to do from morning till evening the work which lies before me, and obtain a clear conception of the order of things; that I be not as those are who spend the day in complaining of headache, and the night in drinking the wine which gives the headache!"

There is something quite solemn in those words. The same thought is expressed in a letter to Lavater: "The desire to

raise the pyramid of my existence, the basis of which is already laid, as high as practicable in the air, absorbs every other desire and scarcely ever quits me. I dare not longer delay; I am already advanced in life, and perhaps Fate will break in at the middle of my work, and leave the Babylonic tower incomplete. At least men shall say it was boldly schemed, and if I live, my powers shall, with God's aid, reach the completion."

No better index of the change can be named than his *Iphigenia auf Tauris*, written at this period. The reader will learn with some surprise that this wonderful poem was originally written in prose; not until the poet went to Italy did he turn it into verse. Prose was the fashion of the day. *Götz, Egmont, Tasso*, and *Iphigenia*, no less than Schiller's *Robbers, Fiesco, Kabbale und Liebe*, were written in prose; and when *Iphigenia* assumed a poetic form, the Weimar friends were disappointed—they *preferred* the prose: a preference which to us seems as strange as if they admired the swan upon dry land more than when floating on the bosom of a lake.

This prose-mania was part of the mania for returning to Nature. Verse was pronounced unnatural; although, in truth, verse is not more unnatural than song. Song is to speech what poetry is to prose; it expresses a different mental condition from that expressed by speech. Impassioned prose *approaches* poetry in the rhythmic impulse of its movements, as impassioned speech in its varied cadences also approaches the intonations of music. The Arabs, under great emotional excitement, give their language a recognizable metre, and talk poetry as M. Jourdain talked prose. But prose never *is* poetry, or is so only for a moment; nor is speech song. Schiller learned to see this, and we find him writing to Goethe, "I have never before been so palpably convinced as in my present

occupation how closely in poetry Substance and Form are connected. Since I have begun to transform my prosaic language into a poetic rhythmical one, I find myself *under a totally different jurisdiction;* even many motives which in the prosaic execution seemed to me to be perfectly in place, I can no longer use: they were merely *good for the common domestic understanding, whose organ prose seems to be;* but verse absolutely demands reference to the imagination, and thus I was obliged to become poetical in many of my motives."

That Goethe should have fallen into the sophism which asserted prose to be more natural than verse, is the more surprising from the spontaneous melody of his thoughts. His mind was a song. To the last he retained the faculty of singing melodiously, when his prose had degenerated into comparative feebleness. And this prose *Iphigenia* is saturated with verses. He *meant* to write prose, but his thoughts instinctively expressed themselves in verse. The critical reader will do well to compare the prose with the poetic version.* He will not only see how frequent the verses are, but how few were the alterations necessary to be made to transform the prose drama into a poem. They are just the sort of touches which elevate poetry above prose. Thus, to give an example, in the prose he says: *unnütz seyn, ist todt seyn* (to be useless is to be dead), which thus grows into a verse—

Ein unnütz Leben ist ein früher Tod.†

Again in the speech of Orestes (Act II, sc. I), there is a fine and terrible allusion to Clytemnestra, "Better die here before the altar than in an obscure nook where the nets of murderous

* See vol. XXXIV of the edition of 1840.

† A life not useful is an earlier death.

near *relatives* are placed." In the prose this allusion is not clear—Orestes simply says, the "nets of assassins".*

The alterations do not touch the substance of this drama; we must therefore consider it a product of the period now under review; and as such we may examine it at once.

* Neither Taylor nor Miss Swanwick appears to have seized the allusion. One translates it, "by the *knives* of *avenging kindred*"; the other, "where *near hands* have spread *assassination's wily net*".

CHAPTER II.

IPHIGENIA.

It was very characteristic in Schlegel to call *Iphigenia* "an echo of Greek song"; he delighted in such rhetorical prettinesses; but that Germany, a land of scholars, should have so unanimously repeated the phrase, and should have so often without misgiving declared *Iphigenia* to be the finest modern specimen of Greek tragedy, is truly surprising, until we reflect on the mass of flagrant traditional errors afloat about the Greek drama. For a long while the Three Unities were held to be inseparable from that drama; in spite of the fact that in several plays Unity of Time is obviously disregarded, and in two or three the Unity of Place is equally so. Then there was the notion that Comedy and Tragedy were not suffered to mingle in the same play; in spite of the palpable fact of Æschylus and Euripides having mingled them. Then came the absurdity of Destiny as the tragic-pivot, in spite of the fact, as I have elsewhere shown, that in the *majority* of these plays Destiny has *no* place, beyond what the religious conceptions of the poets must of necessity have given to it, just as Christianity must of necessity underlie the tragic conceptions of Christian poets.

The very phrase with which critics characterize *Iphigenia* is sufficient to condemn them. They tell us it has "all the repose of Greek tragedy". Consider for a moment—*Repose* in a tragedy! that is to say, calmness in the terrific upheaving of volcanic passions. Tragedy, we are told by Aristotle, acts through Terror and Pity, awakening in our bosoms sympathy with suffering; and to suppose *this* is to be accomplished by the "meditative repose which breathes from every verse" is tantamount to supposing a battle-song will most vigorously stir the blood of combatants if it borrow the accents of a lullaby.

Insensibly our notions of Greek Art are formed from Sculpture; and hence, perhaps, this notion of repose. But acquaintance with the Drama ought to have prevented such an error, and taught men not to confound calmness of *evolution* with calmness of *life*. The unagitated simplicity of Greek scenic representation lay in the nature of the scenic necessities; but we do not call the volcano cold, because the snow rests on its top. Had the Greek Drama been exhibited on stages like those of modern Europe, and performed by actors without cothurnus and mask, its deep agitations of passion would have welled up to the surface, communicating responsive agitations to the form. But there were reasons why this could not be. In the Grecian Drama, everything was on a scale of vastness commensurate with the needs of an audience of many thousands, and consequently everything was disposed in masses rather than in details; it thus necessarily assumed something of the sculpturesque form, threw itself into magnificent groupings, and, with a view to its effect, adapted a peculiar eurhythmic construction. It thus assumed *slowness of movement*, because it could not be rapid with effect. If the critic doubts this, let him mount on stilts and, bawling through a speaking-trumpet,

try what he can make of Shakspeare; he will then have an approximative idea of the restraints laid upon the Grecian actor, who, clothed so as to aggrandize his person, and speaking through a resonant Mask, which had a *fixed* expression, could not *act*, in our modern sense of the word, but only *declaim;* he had no means of representing the *fluctuations* of passion, and the poet therefore was forced to make him represent passion in broad, fixed masses. Hence the *movement* of the Greek Drama was necessarily large, slow, and simple.

But if we pierce beneath scenic necessities and attend solely to the dramatic life which pulses through the Grecian tragedies, what sort of calmness meets us there? Calmness is a relative word. Polyphemus hurling rocks as school-boys throw cherry-stones, would doubtless smile at our riots, as we smile at buzzing flies; and Moloch howling through the unfathomable wilderness in passionate repentance of his fall, would envy us the wildest of our despair, and call it calmness. But measured by human standards I know not whose sorrow "can bear such emphasis" as to pronounce those pulses calm which throb in the *Œdipus*, the *Agamemnon*, or the *Ajax*. The Labdacidan Tale is one of the sombrest threads woven by the Parcæ.

The subjects selected by the Greek dramatists are almost uniformly such as call into play the deepest and darkest passions: madness, adultery, and murder in *Agamemnon;* revenge, murder, and matricide in the *Choëphoræ;* incest in *Œdipus;* jealousy and infanticide in *Medea;* incestuous adultery in *Hippolytus;* madness in *Ajax;* and so on throughout the series. The currents of these passions are for ever kept in agitation, and the alternations of pity and terror close only with the closing of the scene. In other words, in spite of the slowness of its *evolution*, the drama is distinguished by the very absence of the *repose* which is pronounced its characteristic.

Here it is we meet with the first profound difference separating Goethe from the Greek dramatist. The repose which was forced upon the Greek, which formed one of his restraints, as the hardness of the marble restrains the sculptor, Goethe has adopted under conditions which did *not* force him; while the repose, which the Greek kept only at the surface, Goethe has allowed to settle down to the core. In what was accidental, temporal, Goethe has imitated Greek Art; in the essential characteristic he has not imitated it. Racine, so unjustly treated by Schlegel, *has* given us the passionate life of the Greek Drama, in spite of his *Madame* Hermione and *Monsieur* Oreste; in imitating the slow scenic movement he has also imitated the dramatic agitation of the under-current.

Goethe's *Iphigenia*, then, we must cease to regard according to the Grecian standard. It is a German play. It substitutes profound moral and psychological struggles, for the passionate struggles of the old legend. It is not Greek in ideas nor in sentiments. It is German, and transports Germany of the eighteenth century into Scythia during the mythic age, quite as absolutely as Racine places the Court of Versailles in the Camp of Aulis; and with the same ample justification.* The points in which Goethe's work resembles the Greek, are, first, the slowness of its scenic movement and simplicity of its action, which produce a corresponding calmness in the dialogue; and secondly, a saturation of mythic lore. All the rest is German. And this Schiller, as a dramatist, clearly saw. "I am astonished," he says, "to find this piece no longer makes

* This error of local colouring, which critics more erudite than acute have ridiculed in Racine, is not only an error commanded by the very conditions of Art, but is the very error committed by the Greeks themselves. In this play of *Iphigenia*, Euripides has committed anachronisms as gross as any chargeable to Racine; and justly: he wrote for the audience of his day, he did not write for antiquity.

the same favourable impression on me that it did formerly; though I still recognize it as a work full of soul. *It is, however, so astonishingly modern and un-Greek that I cannot understand how it was ever thought to resemble a Greek play.* It is purely moral, but the *sensuous power, the life, the agitation, and everything which specifically belongs to a dramatic work is wanting.* Goethe has himself spoken slightingly of it, but I took that as a mere caprice or coquetry; now I understand him." This is very different from Herder's assertion that the piece is as much above Euripides as Sophocles is above Euripides.

Schiller adds, however, that apart from the dramatic form, *Iphigenia* is a marvellous production, which must for ever remain the delight and wonderment of mankind. This is striking the right chord. A drama it is not; it is a marvellous dramatic poem. The grand and solemn movement of its evolution responds to the large and simple ideas which it unfolds. Its calmness is majesty. In the limpid clearness of its language, the involved mental processes of the characters are as transparent as the operations of bees within a crystal hive; while the constant strain of high and lofty music which sounds through the poem makes the reader feel as if in a holy temple. And above all witcheries of detail there is the one capital witchery, belonging to Greek statues more than to any other works of human cunning—the perfect *unity* of impression produced by the whole, so that nothing in it seems *made*, but all to *grow*, nothing is superfluous, but all is in organic dependence, nothing is there for detached effect, but the whole is effect. The poem fills the mind; but beautiful as the separate passages are, admirers seldom think of passages, they think of the wondrous whole.

I cannot in language less than hyperbolical express my ad-

miration for this work considered in itself; but as a drama, I think an instructive parallel might be drawn between it and the *Iphigeneia* of Euripides. The enormous superiority of Goethe in intellectual stature, even aided by the immeasurable advantage he has to us of writing in a language which is in some sort our own, would not cover his inferiority as a *dramatist.* In the following outline a few points may briefly be touched.

In Euripides we have this groundwork: Iphigenia, about to be sacrificed at Aulis, was snatched away in a cloud by Diana, and a hind substituted in her place; she is now priestess of Diana in Tauris, where she presides over the bloody sacrifice of every stranger thrown on the inhospitable shores. Orestes and Pylades, in obedience to the oracle, come to Tauris intent on bearing away the Image of Diana: that accomplished, Orestes is to be released from the Furies who pursue him. The two are seized, and brought to Iphigenia for sacrifice. A recognition takes place; and she aids them in their original design of carrying away the goddess. They are pursued by the Scythians, but Minerva appears, to cut the knot and calm the rage of Thoas.

This story Goethe has modernized. The characters are essentially different, the moral elements at work are different, and the effect is different. His Iphigenia, every way superior to the Greek priestess, has the high, noble, tender, delicate soul of a Christian maiden. Forced to fulfil the duties of a Priestess, she subdues by her mild influence the fierce prejudice of Thoas, and makes him discontinue the barbarous practice of human sacrifices. She, who herself had been anointed as a sacrifice, could she preside over the sacrifice of another? This sympathy is modern. No Greek would have suffered her own personal feelings thus to rise up in rebellion against a religious rite.

The key note is struck here, and this tone sounds through the whole piece.

Iphigenia is melancholy, and pines for her native shores, in spite of the honour which attends, and the good she effects by her influence on Thoas. The fate of her family perturbs her. Thoas has conceived a passion for her.

> Thou sharedst my sorrow when a hostile sword
> Tore from my side my last, my dearest son;
> *Long as fierce vengeance occupied my heart,*
> *I did not feel my dwelling's dreary void;*
> But now, returning home, my rage appeased,
> My foes defeated and my son avenged,
> I find there's nothing left to comfort me.*

And he expresses a hope to "bear her to his dwelling as a bride", which she gently evades; he then taxes her with the mystery in which she has shrouded herself. She answers—

> If I concealed, O king, my name and race,
> 'Twas fear which prompted me, and not mistrust:
> For didst thou know who stands before thee now,
> And what accursed head thy arm protects,
> A shuddering horror would possess thy heart;
> And, far from wishing me to share thy throne,
> Wouldst banish me perchance.

Thoas replies, with generosity, that nothing shall make him cease his protection.

* In all extracts from this work, I avail myself of the translation by Miss Swanwick (*Selections from Goethe and Schiller*), which is many degrees superior to that of the late William Taylor (*Survey of German Poetry*, vol. III). Feeling, as I profoundly feel, the insuperable difficulties of translating Goethe into English, it would ill become me to criticise Miss Swanwick's version; but it would also be very unjust not to add, that all versions miss the exquisite beauty of the original, and resemble it no more than a rough woodcut resembles a Titian.

In my hands
The goddess placed thee; thou hast been to me
As sacred as to her, and her behest
Shall for the future also be my law.
If thou canst hope in safety to return
Back to thy kindred, I renounce my claims.

This promise becomes an important agent in the dénouement, and is skilfully contrived. Iphigenia, urged by him to speak out, utters this tremendous line:

Know: I issue from the race of Tantalus!*

Thoas is staggered; but after she has narrated the story of her race, he repeats his offer of marriage, which she will not accept. Irritated by her refusal, he exclaims:

Be priestess still
Of the great goddess who selected thee;
And may she pardon me that I from her
Unjustly, and with secret self-reproach,
Her ancient sacrifice so long withheld.
From olden times no stranger near'd our shore
But fell a victim at her sacred shrine;
But thou with kind affection didst enthral me
That I forgot my duty. Thou didst rock
My senses in a dream: I did not hear
My people's murmurs: now they cry aloud,
Ascribing my poor son's untimely death
To this my guilt. No longer for thy sake
Will I oppose the wishes of the crowd
Who urgently demand the sacrifice.
. . . . .

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* *Vernimm: ich bin aus Tantalus Geschlecht.*

Miss Swanwick, from metrical necessity, has weakened this into—

"Attend: I issue from the Titan's race."

It was indispensable to preserve the name of Tantalus, so pregnant with terrible suggestion.

Two strangers, whom in caverns of the shore
We found concealed, and whose arrival here
Bodes to my realm no good, are in my power:
With them thy goddess may once more resume
Her ancient, pious, long-suspended rites.

Thus ends the first act.

In the conception of Thoas a great dramatic collision is rendered impossible: so high and generous a nature cannot resist an appeal to his generosity, and thus the spectator foresees there will be no struggle. In Euripides, on the contrary, the fierce Scythian looms from the dark back-ground, terrible as fate; and he is properly not made to appear on the scene until the very last. *How* he is to be appeased no spectator foresees. To be sure he is appeased by a *Deus ex machina*, and not by a dramatic unravelling of the entangled threads; but this inferiority is, dramatically speaking, more than compensated by the effect of the collision, and the agitation kept up to the last. Thoas, in Goethe, is a *moral*, not a *dramatic* figure.*

The carelessness to all dramatic effect which weakens this play, is seen in the very avoidance of a path Euripides had opened, viz., the certainty in the mind of the audience that Orestes and Pylades are the two captives to be slaughtered. In Euripides, Orestes and his companion appear on the scene before they are made prisoners; in Goethe, not till after their capture has been announced. The effect of the

* The notion of making Thoas in love is not new. Lagrange-Chancel, in his *Oreste et Pylade* (a real treat to any one with a perception of the ludicrous), has thrown as much "galanterie" into this play as one may find in an opera. Thoas loves Iphigénie, who loves Pylade; but while the tyrant sighs in vain, the truculent Scythian is sighed for by Thomyris, *princesse du sang royal des Scythes*. As a specimen of *couleur locale*, I may mention that Thoas in this play has a *capitaine des gardes* and two *ministres d'état*, with an *ambassadeur Sarmate* resident at his court.

announcement in Euripides is powerful, in Goethe it is null.*

In the second act Orestes and Pylades appear. The scene between them is very undramatic, but beautiful as a poetic exposition of their mental conditions. Orestes feels—

> It is the path of death that now we tread,
> At every step my soul grows more serene.

But Pylades clings to life, and to his purpose. "Am I not", he says—

> As ever full of courage and of joy?
> And love and courage are the spirit's wings
> Wafting to noble actions.

Orestes. Noble actions?
Time was when fancy painted such before us!
When oft, the game pursuing, on we roam'd
O'er hill and valley: hoping that ere long,
With club and weapon arm'd, we so might chase
The track of robber or of monster huge.
And then at twilight, by the glassy sea,
We peaceful sat reclined against each other;
The waves came dancing to our very feet,
And all before us lay the wide, wide world.
Then on a sudden one would seize his sword,
And future deeds shone round us like the stars
Which gemm'd in countless throngs the vault of night.

Pylades. Endless, my friend, the projects which the soul

---

* Compare Eurip. v. 264, sq. There is one touch in the peasant's narrative which is very significant of that period when gods walked the earth so familiarly with man that every stranger might be taken for a god:

> ἐνταῦθα δισσοὺς εἶδε τις νεανίας
> βουφορβὸς ἡμῶν καπεχώρησεν πάλιν
> ἄκροισι δακτύλοισι πορθμεύων ἴχνος,
> ἔλεξε δ' οὐχ ὁρᾶτε· δαίμονές τινες
> θάσσουσιν οἵδε.

"There one of our cowboys espied the two youths, and stepping backwards on the points of his toes, retraced his steps, saying, "Do you not see them? they are gods seated there."

Burns to accomplish. We would every deed
Perform at once as grandly as it shows
After long ages, when from land to land
The poet's swelling song hath rolled it on.
It sounds so lovely what our fathers did,
When in the silent evening shade reclined,
We drink it in with music's melting tones.
And what we do, is as it was to them
Toilsome and incomplete.

Pylades fails to inspire him, however, with the resolution which he feels, and with belief in the probability of their escape from the shameful death, which Orestes accepts so calmly. Pylades has heard from the guards the character of Iphigenia; and congratulates himself on the fact that it is a woman who holds their fates in her hands, for even the best of men

With horror may familiarize his mind;
Through custom so transform his character,
That he at length shall make himself a law
Of what his very soul at first abhorred.

On some not very intelligible pretext he makes Orestes withdraw, that he may have an interview with Iphigenia; and as she approaches, unbinds his chains, and speaks, he adroitly bursts forth into these words:

Delicious music! dearly welcome tones
Of our own language in a foreign land!
With joy my captive eye once more beholds
The azure mountains of my native coast.*

* M. Patin has, I think, mistaken the import of this speech: comparing it it with the simple exclamation of Philocletes, he says, "Philoclète n'en savait pas tant, il n'était pas si habile à se rendre compte de ses secrets mouvements: tout ce qu'il pouvait était de s'écrier, 'O douce parole!'" *Études sur les Tragiques Grecs*, III, p. 323. But Pylades is not expressing *his* sentiments. His ear is not unfamiliar with the accents of his own language—he has just before heard them from Orestes; but by picturing Greece to *her*, he adroitly excites her sympathy for *himself*, a Greek.

He then tells her a story something like the real one, but disguising names: the *purpose* of which I do not detect. She inquires after her family, and hears the story of her mother's guilt. Noting her agitation, he asks if she be connected with that family by friendship. She sternly replies:

> Say on: and tell me how the deed was done.

He tells her. All she says is a few brief words, which are terribly significant: when he concludes, she veils herself, and withdraws, saying:

> Enough. Thou soon wilt see me once again.

and the act ends in this very *evasive* manner. The third act opens with the visit of Iphigenia to Orestes, in which she requests him to *finish* the story that Pylades had already half told; and he does so at some length. Disdaining the guile which had prompted Pylades to conceal their names, he boldly says:

> I am Orestes!

Here is a proper *ἀναγνωρισις*,—and naturally, no less than dramatically, it demands a cry from the heart of Iphigenia, who should at once fling herself into her brother's arms, and confess their relationship. Instead of this, she suffers him to continue talking, and to withdraw, and only reveals herself in the next scene! This is more like the dramatic treatment we find in juvenile writers, than what is expected from a great poet. Orestes has a return of his madness. He recovers from it, to feel himself purified by his sister's purity; and Pylades now suggests that they shall bear away the image, and depart together.

It is evident that the tragic situation in this story is the slaughter of a brother by a sister ignorant of a relationship

perfectly known to the audience. So far from having developed the tragedy of such a situation, Goethe has scarcely touched upon it, and never once awakened our fears: from first to last we are in no suspense, our emotions are untouched, our curiosity alone is excited to watch the process by which the terrible fate will be escaped. In Euripides, on the contrary, everything conspires to increase the terror of the situation. Iphigenia, formerly so mild that she wept with her victims, now rages like a lioness bereaved of her cubs. She has dreamed that Orestes is dead, and in her desolate condition resolves to wreak her woe on others. Her brother and his friend are brought before her. She questions them as to their names. Orestes refuses to tell her. In a rapid interchange of questions and answers she learns the story of her family; and then offers to save *one* of their lives, on condition that the pardoned bear for her a letter to Argos. Here a contest of generosity ensues, as to who shall accept his life. Pylades is at length prevailed upon. The discovery is thus managed: Pylades, bound by his oath to deliver the letter, suggests this difficulty, viz., that should the boat be upset, or should the letter be lost, how then can he fulfil his promise? Hereupon, to anticipate such an accident, Iphigenia tells him the contents of the letter; and in telling him reveals her name. This produces the natural cry from Orestes, who avows himself, and clasps her in his arms. The dramatic movement of this scene is admirable. From this point the interest in Euripides slackens, in Goethe it deepens. In the Greek play this is the culmination of passionate interest; for although the stratagem by which Iphigenia contrives to bear away the sacred image would flatter the propensities of the cunning Athenian audience,* it must have been, even to

* Comp. *Euripides*, v, 1157, sq. Iphigenia pretends that as the image of the goddess has been stained by the impure hands of the two captives, it

them, a delight altogether of a lower kind, addressing lower faculties, than those addressed by the tragic processional grandeur of the earlier portions; whereas in the German play, the hitherto feeble passionate interest now rises in an ascending scale of high *moral* interest, so that the tragedy evolved addresses the conscience rather than the emotions, being less the conflict of passions than the high conflict with Duty.

In the fourth act Iphigenia thus communes with herself—

> Me they have supplied
> With artful answers, should the monarch send
> To urge their sacrifice. Alas! I see
> I must consent to follow like a child;
> I have not learned deception, nor the art
> To gain with crafty wiles my purposes.
> Detested falsehood! it doth not relieve
> The breast like words of truth; it comforts not,
> But is a torment to the forger's heart,
> And, like an arrow which a god directs,
> Flies back and wounds the archer. Thro' my heart
> One fear doth chase another; perhaps, e'en now,
> Once more on the unconsecrated shore
> The Furies seize my brother; or, perchance,
> They are surprised; methinks I hear the tread
> Of armèd men approaching! Oh, 'tis he!
> A messenger is coming from the king
> With hasty steps. Alas! how throbs my heart
> With anxious fear, now that I see the man
> Whom with a word untrue I must encounter!

She has to save more than her brother's life; she has

must be purified, and for this purpose she intends to cleanse it in the sea, but that must be done in solitude. She then bids Thoas command that every citizen shall remain within doors, carefully avoiding a sight of that which may pollute them—*μυσαρὰ γὰρ τὰ τοιάδ' ἐστι*:—nay more, with an ingenuity which is almost farcical, she bids Thoas himself remain within the Temple, throwing a veil over his eyes as the captives issue forth, and he is not to consider it at all singular if she is a long while absent. In this way she contrives to escape with the image, having made fools of Thoas and his guards.

to save him from the Furies; this is only to be done by deceit, inasmuch as force is impossible under the circumstances. To a Greek mind nothing could be more satisfactory. The Greek *preferred* deceit to force; but the Christianized conscience revolts from deceit as cowardly and deeply immoral.

"L'honneur parle, il suffit, ce sont là nos oracles!"*

Accordingly Iphigenia shudders at the falsehood which is forced upon her, and only requires to be reminded by the king's messenger of the constant kindness and considerateness with which Thoas has treated her, to make her pause:

My brother forcibly engrossed my heart,—
I listened only to his friend's advice;
My soul rushed eagerly to rescue them,
And as the mariner with joy surveys
The lessening breakers of a desert isle,
So Tauris lay behind me. But the voice
Of faithful Arkas wakes me from my dream,
Reminding me that those whom I forsake
Are also men. Deceit doth now become
Doubly detested.

When, therefore, Pylades arrives, urging her to flight, she communicates to him her scruples.

Pylades. Him thou dost fly who would have slain thy brother.
Iphig. To me at least he hath been ever kind.
Pylades. What Fate commands is not ingratitude.
Iphig. Alas! it still remains ingratitude,—
Necessity alone can justify it.
Pylades. Thee before gods and men it justifies.
Iphig. *But my own heart is still unsatisfied.*
Pylades. Scruples too rigid are a cloak for pride.
Iphig. *I cannot argue, I can only feel.*

* Racine.

How modern all this is! Pylades with more worldly views says:

Life teaches us
To be less strict with others than ourselves;
Thou 'lt learn the lesson too. So wonderful
Is human nature, and its varied ties
Are so involved and complicate, that none
May hope to keep his inmost spirit pure,
And walk without perplexity thro' life.

Here, then, lies the tragedy. Will this soul belie its own high instincts, even for the sake of saving her brother? The alternative is horrible; and after pourtraying the temptation in all its force, and human frailty in all its tenderness, the poet shows us human grandeur in this fine burst from the unhappy priestess:

Attend, O king!
A secret plot is laid; 'tis vain to ask
Touching the captives; they are gone, and seek
Their comrades, who await them on the shore.
The eldest—he whom madness lately seized,
And who is now recovered—is Orestes,
My brother! and the other, Pylades,
His early friend and faithful confidant.
From Delphi, Phœbus sent them to this shore,
With a divine command to steal away
The image of Diana, and to him
Bear back the sister, promising for this
Redemption to the blood-stained matricide.
I have delivered now into thy hands
The remnants of the house of Tantalus:
Destroy us—if thou darest!

For anything like *this* we seek in vain throughout the Greek Drama; and the mere grandeur of the conception would produce an overpowering effect on the stage, if delivered with anything like adequate depth and dignity. Imagine the thrilling tones and exquisite gestures of Rachel in this passage!

Had Thoas been represented as a fierce Scythian, or even had he not been hitherto allowed to convince us of his generosity, the "collision" would have been stronger; as it is, we have little faith in his ferocity. He has nearly relented when Orestes rushes in with drawn sword to hasten Iphigenia away, because their design has been discovered. A scene ensues in which Thoas is resolved not to suffer the Image of Diana to be borne away; and as to carry it away is the object of Orestes, it must be decided by force of arms. But now a light suddenly breaks in upon Orestes, who reads the oracle in another way. Apollo said—

> "Back to Greece the sister bring,
> Who in the sanctuary on Tauris' shore
> Unwillingly abides; so ends the curse."
> To Phœbus' sister we applied the words,
> And he referred to *thee.*

It was Iphigenia who was to purify him, and to bear *her* away is to fulfil Apollo's orders. This interpretation loosens the knot. Iphigenia recalls to Thoas his promise that she should depart if ever she could return in safety to her kindred, and he reluctantly says, "Then go!" to which she answers—

> Not so, my king; I cannot part
> Without thy blessing, or in anger from thee.
> Banish us not! the sacred right of guests
> Still let us claim: so not eternally
> Shall we be severed. Honour'd and beloved,
> As my own father was, art thou by me:
> Farewell! Oh! do not turn away, but give
> One kindly word of parting in return.
> So shall the wind more gently swell our sails,
> And from our eyes with softened anguish flow
> The tears of separation. Fare thee well!
> And graciously extend to me thy hand
> In pledge of ancient friendship.

Thoas (extending his hand). Fare thee well!

This is a very touching, noble close, and is in exquisite harmony with the whole.

The remarks on this masterpiece have already occupied so much space that I could not, were I disposed, pause to examine the various collateral points of criticism which have been raised in Germany. I will merely allude to the characteristic difference between Ancient and Modern Art: the Furies in Euripides are terrible Apparitions, real beings personated by actors; in Goethe they are Phantasms moving across the stage of an unhappy soul, but visible only to the inward eye; in like manner, the Greek dénouement is the work of the actual interference of the Goddess in person, whereas the German dénouement is a loosening of the knot by deeper insight into the meaning of the oracle.

CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS.

RETURNING to the narrative, we find Goethe in the beginning of 1779 very active in his new official duties. He has accepted the direction of the War Department, which suddenly assumes new importance, owing to the preparations for a war. He is constantly riding about the country, and doing his utmost to alleviate the condition of the people. "Misery," he says, "becomes as prosaic and familiar to me as my own hearth, but nevertheless I do not let go my idea, and will wrestle with the unknown Angel, even should I halt upon my thigh. No man knows what I do, and with how many foes I fight to bring forth a little."

Among the "little things" may be noted an organization of Firemen, then greatly wanted. Fires were not only numerous, but were rendered terrible by the want of any systematic service to subdue them. Goethe, who in Frankfurt had rushed into the bewildered crowd, and astonished spectators by his rapid peremptory disposition of their efforts into a certain system—who in Apolda and Ettersburg lent aid and command, till his eyebrows were singed and his feet were burned—naturally took it much to heart that no regular service was supplied, and he persuaded the Duke to institute one.

On this (his thirtieth) birthday the Duke, recognizing his official services, raised him to the place of *Geheimrath.* "It is strange and dreamlike," writes the Frankfurt burgher in his new-made honour, "that I in my thirtieth year enter the highest place which a German citizen can reach. *On ne va jamais plus loin que quand on ne sait où l'on va,* said a great climber of this world." If he thought it strange, Weimar thought it scandalous. "The hatred of people here," writes Wieland, "against our Goethe, who has done no one any harm, has grown to such a pitch since he has been made Geheimrath, that it borders on fury." But the Duke, if he heard these howls, paid no attention to them. He was more than ever with his friend. They started on the 12th of September on a little journey into Switzerland, in the strictest incognito, and with the lightest of travelling trunks. They touched at Frankfurt, and stayed in the old house in the *Hirschgraben,* where Rath Goethe had the pride of receiving not only his son as Geheimrath, but the Prince, his friend and master. Goethe's mother was, as may be imagined, in high spirits,—motherly pride and housewifely pride being equally stimulated by the presence of such guests.

From Frankfurt they went to Strasburg. There the recollection of Frederika irresistibly drew him to Sesenheim. In his letter to the Frau von Stein he says: "On the 25th I rode towards Sesenheim, and there found the family as I had left it eight years ago. I was welcomed in the most friendly manner. The second daughter loved me in those days better than I deserved, and more than others to whom I have given so much passion and faith. I was forced to leave her at a moment when it nearly cost her her life; she passed lightly over that episode to tell me what traces still remained of the old illness, and behaved with such exquisite delicacy and generosity from the moment that

I stood before her unexpected on the threshold, that I felt quite relieved. I must do her the justice to say that she made not the slightest attempt to rekindle in my bosom the cinders of love. She led me into the arbour, and there we sat down. It was a lovely moonlight, and I inquired after every one and everything. Neighbours had spoken of me not a week ago. I found old songs which I had composed, and a carriage I had painted. We recalled many a pastime of those happy days, and I found myself as vividly conscious of all, as if I had been away only six months. The old people were frank and hearty, and thought me looking younger. I stayed the night there and departed at dawn, leaving behind me friendly faces; so that I can now think once more of this corner of the world with comfort, and know that they are at peace with me."

There is something very touching in this interview, and in his narrative of it, forwarded to the woman he *now* loves, and who does not repay him with a love like that of Frederika. Frederika here, as everywhere, shows a sweet and noble nature, worthy of a happier fate. Her whole life was one of sweet self-sacrifice. Lenz had fallen in love with her; others offered to marry her, but she refused all offers. "The heart that has once loved Goethe," she exclaimed, "can belong to no one else."

On the 26th Goethe rejoined his party, and "in the afternoon I called on Lili, and found the lovely *Grasaffen** with a baby of seven weeks old, her mother standing by. There also I was received with admiration and pleasure. I made many inquiries, and to my great delight found the good creature happily married. Her husband, from what I could learn, seems a worthy sensible fellow, rich, well placed in the world; in short, she has everything she needs. He was absent. I stayed dinner. After dinner went with the Duke to see the Cathedral, and in the

* *Grasaffen*, i.e., a marmoset. It was a favourite term of endearment.

evening saw Paisiello's beautiful opera, *L'Infante di Zamora.* Supped with Lili, and went away in the moonlight. The sweet emotions which accompanied me I cannot describe."

Do you not feel in these two descriptions the difference of the two women, and the difference of his feeling for them? From Strasburg he went to Emmendingen, and there visited his sister's grave. Accompanied by such thoughts as these three visits must have called up, he entered Switzerland. His *Briefe aus der Schweitz,* mainly composed from the letters to the Frau von Stein, will inform the curious reader of the effect these scenes produced on him; we cannot pause here in the narrative to quote from them. Enough if we mention that in Zurich he spent happy hours with Lavater, in communication of ideas and feelings; and that on his way home he composed the little opera of *Jery und Bätely,* full of Swiss inspiration. In Stuttgart the Duke took it into his head to visit the Court, and as no presentable costume was ready, tailors had to be set in activity to furnish the tourists with the necessary clothes. They assisted at the New Year festivities of the Military Academy, and here for the first time Schiller, then twenty years of age, with the *Robbers* in his head, saw the author of *Götz* and *Werther.*

On the 13th of January 1780, after a four months' absence, they returned to Weimar. Both were considerably altered to their advantage. In his Diary Goethe writes: "I feel daily that I gain more and more the confidence of people; and God grant that I may deserve it, not in the easy way, but in the way I wish. What I endure from myself and others, no one sees. The best is the deep stillness in which I live *vis à vis* to the world, and thus win what fire and sword cannot rob me of." He was crystallizing slowly; slowly gaining the complete command over himself. "I will be lord over myself. No one who

cannot master himself is worthy to rule, and only he *can* rule." But with such a temperament this mastery was not easy; wine and women's tears, he felt, were among his weaknesses:

> Ich könnte viel glücklicher seyn,
> Gäb's nur keinen Wein
> Und keine Weiberthränen.

He could not entirely free himself from either. He was a Rhinelander, accustomed from boyhood upwards to the stimulus of wine; he was a poet, never free from the fascinations of woman. But just as he was never known to lose his head with wine, so also did he never lose himself entirely to a woman: the stimulus never grew into intoxication.

One sees that his passion for the Frau von Stein continues; but it is cooling. It was necessary for him to love some one, but he was loving here in vain, and he begins to settle into a calmer affection. He is also at this time thrown more and more with Corona Schröter; and his participation in the private theatricals is not only an agreeable relaxation from the heavy pressure of official duties, but is giving him materials for *Wilhelm Meister*, now in progress. "Theatricals," he says, "remains one of the few things in which I still have the pleasure of a child and an artist." Herder, who had hitherto held somewhat aloof, now draws closer and closer to him, probably on account of the change which is coming over his way of life. And this intimacy with Herder awakens in him the desire to see Lessing; the projected journey to Wolfenbüttel is arrested, however, by the sad news which now arrives that the great gladiator is at peace: Lessing is dead.

Not without significance is the fact that, coincident with this change in Goethe's life, comes the passionate study of Science, often before taken up in desultory impatience, but now commencing with that seriousness which is to project it as an active

tendency through the remainder of his life. He was trying to find a secure basis for his aims; it was natural he should seek a secure basis for his mind; and with such a mind that basis could only be found in the study of Nature. As Poet and as Thinker, Nature was "the be-all and the end-all" of his strivings. A mere Poet he could not be, for he was a German, and a German of the eighteenth century: but, whereas Schiller sought the complement of his activity in Metaphysics, Goethe sought his complement in Science. If it is true, as men of science sometimes declare with a sneer, that Goethe was a Poet in Science (which does not in the least disprove the fact that he was great in Science, and made great discoveries), it is equally true that he was a scientific Poet. In a future chapter we shall have to consider what his position in Science truly is; for the present we merely indicate the course of his studies. Buffon's wonderful book, *Les Epoques de la Nature*—rendered antiquated now by the progress of geology, but still attractive in its style and noble thoughts—produced a profound impression on him. In Buffon, as in Spinoza, and later on, in Geoffroy St. Hilaire, he found a mode of looking at Nature which thoroughly coincided with his own, gathering all details into a poetic synthesis. Saussure, whom he had seen at Geneva, led him to study Mineralogy; and as his official duties gave him many occasions to mingle with the miners, this study acquired a practical interest, which soon grew into a passion—much to the disgust of Herder, who, in the true literary spirit was constantly mocking him for "bothering himself about stones and cabbages". To these studies must be added Anatomy, and in particular Osteology, which in early years had also attracted him, when he attained knowledge enough to draw the heads of animals for Lavater's *Physiognomy*. He now goes to Jena to study under Loder, professor of Anatomy. For these studies

his talent, or want of talent, as a draughtsman, had further to be cultivated. And thus, amid serious duties and many distractions in the shape of court festivities, balls, masquerades, and theatricals, he found time for the prosecution of vast studies. How he got through, is a mystery. He was like Napoleon, a giant-worker, and never so happy as when at work.

Tasso was conceived, and commenced (in prose) at this time, and *Wilhelm Meister* advanced beside numberless smaller works. But nothing was published. He lived for himself, and the small circle of friends. The public was never thought of. Indeed the public was then jubilant in beerhouses, and scandalized in salons, at the appearance of the *Robbers;* and a certain Kütner, in publishing his *Characters of German Poets and Prose writers* (1781) could complacently declare that the shouts of praise which intoxicated admirers had once raised for Goethe were now no longer heard. Meanwhile *Egmont* was in progress, and assuming a far different tone from that in which it was originated.

It is unnecessary to follow closely all the details of his life at this period, which letters so abundantly furnish. They will not help us to a nearer understanding of the man, and they would occupy much space. What we observe in them all is, a slow advance to a more serious and decisive plan of existence. On the 27th of May his father dies. On the 1st of June Goethe comes to live in the town of Weimar, as more consonant with his position and avocations. The Duchess Amalia has promised to give him a part of the necessary furniture. He quits his *Gartenhaus* with regret, but makes it still his retreat for happy hours. Shortly afterwards comes the imperial diploma, elevating him to the nobility: henceforth he is *Von* Goethe. It had been too long expected, to cause much astonish-

ment in Weimar, or to affect him much; yet we cannot think the Frankfurt citizen was insensible of the honour, although at first he wished to decline it. The President of the Kammer, Herr von Kalb, was suddenly dismissed from his post, which made a considerable sensation. Goethe was the substitute, at first merely occupying the post *ad interim;* but not relinquishing his place in the Privy Council.

More important to us is the relation in which he stands to Karl August and the Frau von Stein. Whoever reads with proper attention the letters published in the Stein correspondence will become aware of a notable change in their relation about this time (1781-2). The tone, which had grown calmer, now rises again into passionate fervour, and every note reveals the happy lover. From the absence of her letters and other evidence, it is impossible to assign the cause of this change with any certainty. It may have been that six years' probation convinced her of his sincerity. It may have been that Corona Schröter made her jealous. It may have been that she feared to lose him. One is inclined to suspect her of some questionable motive, because it is clear that her conduct to him was not straightforward in the beginning, and, as we shall see, became ungenerous towards the close. Whatever the motive, the fact is palpable. He was happy at last. The extraordinary fascination she exercised over him, the deep and constant devotion he gave her, the thorough identification of her with all his thoughts and aims, can only be appreciated after a careful perusal of his letters. A sentence or two must suffice here. "O thou best beloved! I have had all my life an ideal wish of how I would be loved, and have sought in vain its realization in vanishing dreams; and now, when the world daily becomes clearer to me, I find this realization in thee, and in a way which can never be lost." Again. "Dearest, what

do I not owe thee! If thou didst not also love me so entirely, if thou only hadst me as a friend among others, I should still be bound to dedicate my whole existence to thee. For could I ever have renounced my errors without thy aid? When could I have looked so clearly at the world, and found myself so happy in it, before this time when I have nothing more to seek in it?" And this: "As a sweet melody raises us to heaven, so is to me thy being and thy love. I move among friends and acquaintances everywhere as if seeking thee; I find thee not, and return into my solitude."

While he was thus happy, thus settling down into clearness, the young Duke, not yet having worked through the turbulence of youth, was often in discord with him. If ever the correspondence with Karl August should be published, it will be seen that Goethe, who in the first days of their friendship treated him as a young companion, exchanging the brotherly *Thou* with him, and entering into all the wildness of the hour, gradually assumed a more respectful tone, and with it a more directing earnestness. Karl August continued the brotherly Thou to the last; but Goethe's tone grows more and more ministerial as the years advance. Not that his affection diminished, but as he grew more serious, he grew more attentive to decorum. For the Duchess he seems to have had a tender admiration, something of which may be read in *Tasso*. Her noble, dignified, though somewhat cold nature, the greatness of her heart, and delicacy of her mind, would all the more have touched him, because he knew and could sympathize with what was not perfectly happy in her life. He was often the pained witness of little domestic disagreements, and had to remonstrate with the Duke on his occasional roughness.

From the letters to the Frau von Stein we gather that Goethe was gradually becoming impatient with Karl August,

whose excellent qualities he cherishes while deploring his extravagances. "Enthusiastic as he is for what is good and right, he has, notwithstanding, less pleasure in it than in what is improper; it is wonderful how reasonable he can be, what insight he has, how much he knows; and yet when he sets about anything good, he must needs begin with something foolish. Unhappily, one sees it lies deep in his nature, and that the frog is made for the water even when he has lived some time on land." In the following we see that the "servile courtier" not only remonstrates with the Duke, but refuses to accompany him on his journey, having on a previous journey been irritated by his manners. "Here is an epistle. If you think right, send it to the Duke, speak to him and do not spare him. I only want quiet for myself, and for him to know with whom he has to do. *You can tell him also that I have declared to you I will never travel with him again.* Do this in your own prudent gentle way." Accordingly he lets the Duke go away alone; but they seem to have come to some understanding subsequently, and the threat was not fulfilled. Two months after, this sentence informs us of the reconciliation: "I have had a long and serious conversation with the Duke. In this world, my best one, the dramatic writer has a rich harvest; and the wise say, Judge no man until you have stood in his place." Later on we find him complaining of the Duke going wrong in his endeavours to do right. "God knows if he will ever learn that fireworks at midday produce no effect. I don't like always playing the pedagogue and bugbear, and from the others he asks no advice, nor does he ever tell them of his plans." Here is another glimpse: "The Duchess is as amiable as possible, the Duke is a good creature, and one could heartily love him if he did not trouble the intercourse of life by his manners, and did not make his friends

indifferent as to what befals him by his breakneck recklessness. It is a curious feeling, that of daily contemplating the possibility of our nearest friends breaking their necks, arms, or legs, and yet have grown quite callous to the idea!" Again: "The Duke goes to Dresden. He has begged me to go with him, or at least to follow him, but I shall stay here. . . . The preparations for the Dresden journey are quite against my taste. The Duke arranges them in his way, *i. e.*, not always the best, and disgusts one after the other. I am quite calm, for it is not alterable, and I only rejoice that there is no kingdom for which such cards could be played often."

These are little discordant tones which must have arisen as Goethe grew more serious. The real regard he had for the Duke is not injured by these occasional outbreaks. "The Duke is guilty of many follies which I willingly forgive, remembering my own," says Goethe. He knows that he can at any moment put his horses to the carriage and drive away from Weimar, and this consciousness of freedom makes him contented; although he now makes up his mind that he is destined by nature to be an author and nothing else. "I have a purer delight than ever, when I have written something which well expresses what I meant . . ." "I am truly born to be a private man, and do not understand how fate has contrived to throw me into a ministry and into a princely family." As he grows clearer on the true mission of his life, he also grows happier. One can imagine the strange feelings with which he would now take up *Werther*, and for the first time since ten years read this product of his youth. He made some alterations in it, especially in the relation of Albert to Lotte; and introduced the episode of the peasant who commits suicide from jealousy. Schöll, in his admirable notes to the *Stein Correspondence*,*

* Vol. III, p. 268.

has called attention to a point worthy of notice, viz., that Herder, who helped Goethe in the revision of this work, had pointed out to him the very same fault in its composition which Napoleon two-and-twenty years later laid his finger on; the fault, namely, of making Werther's suicide partly the consequence of frustrated ambition and partly of unrequited love—a fault which, in spite of Herder and Napoleon, in spite also of Goethe's acquiescence, I venture to think no fault at all, as will be shown when the interview with Napoleon is narrated.

CHAPTER IV.

PREPARATIONS FOR ITALY.

With the year 1783 we see him more and more seriously occupied. He has ceased to be "the Grand Master of all the Apes", and is deep in old books and archives. The birth of a crown prince came to fill Weimar with joy, and give the Duke a sudden seriousness. The baptism, which took place on the fifth of February, was a great event in Weimar. Herder preached "like a God," said Wieland, whose cantata was sung on the occasion. Processions by torchlight, festivities of all kinds, poems from every poet, *except* Goethe, testified the people's joy. There is something very generous in this silence on the part of Goethe. It could not be attributed to want of affection. But he who had been ever ready with ballet, opera, or poem, to honour the birthday of the two Duchesses, must have felt that now, when all the other Weimar writers were pouring in their offerings, he ought not to throw the weight of his position in the scale against them. Had his poem been the worst of the offerings it would have been prized the highest, because it was his.

The Duke, proud in his paternity, writes to Merck: "You have reason to rejoice with me; for if there be any good dispositions in me they have hitherto wanted a fixed point, but

now there is a firm hook upon which I can hang my pictures. With the help of Goethe and good luck I will so paint that if possible the next generation shall say, he too was a painter!" And from this time forward there seems to have been a decisive change in him; though he does complain of the "taciturnity of his *Herr Kammerpräsident*" (Goethe), who is only to be drawn out by the present of an engraving. In truth this *Kammerpräsident* is very much oppressed with work, and lives in great seclusion, happy in love, active in study. The official duties which formerly he undertook so gaily, are obviously becoming burdens to him, the more so now his mission rises into greater distinctness. The old desire for Italy begins to torment him. "The happiest thing is, that I can now say I am on the right path, and from this time forward nothing will be lost."

In his poem *Ilmenau*, written in this year, Goethe vividly depicts the character of the Duke, and the certainty of his metamorphosis. Having seen how he speaks of the Duke in his letters to the Frau von Stein, it will gratify the reader to observe that these criticisms were no "behind the back" carpings, but were explicitly expressed even in poetry. "The poem of Ilmenau," Goethe said to Eckermann, "contains in the form of an episode an epoch which, in 1783 when I wrote it, had happened some years before; so that I could describe myself historically and hold a conversation with myself of former years. There occurs in it a nightly scene after one of the breakneck chases in the mountain. We had built ourselves at the foot of a rock some little huts, and covered them with fir branches, that we might pass the night on dry ground. Before the huts we burned several fires and cooked our game. Knebel, whose pipe was never cold, sat next to the fire, and enlivened the company

with his jokes, while the wine passed freely. Seckendorf had stretched himself against a tree and was humming all sorts of poetics. On one side lay the Duke in deep slumber. I myself sat before him in the glimmering light of the coals, absorbed in various grave thoughts, suffering for the mischief which my writings had produced." The sketch of the Duke is somewhat thus to be translated: "Who can tell the caterpillar creeping on the branch, of what its future food will be? Who can help the grub upon the earth to burst its shell? The time comes when it presses out and hurries winged into the bosom of the rose. Thus will the years bring *him* also the right direction of his strength. As yet, beside the deep desire for the True, he has a passion for Error. Temerity lures him too far, no rock is too steep, no path too narrow, peril lies at his side threatening. Then the wild unruly impulse hurries him to and fro, and from restless activity, he restlessly tries repose. Gloomily wild in happy days, free without being happy, he sleeps, fatigued in body and soul, upon a rocky couch."

While we are at Ilmenau let us not forget the exquisite little poem written there this September, with a pencil, on the wall of that hut on the Gickelhahn, which is still shown to visitors:

Ueber allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh,
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vögelein schweigen in Walde;
Warte nur, balde
Ruhest du auch.

He had many unpleasant hours in the control of the Finances, striving in vain to make the Duke keep within a prescribed definite sum for expenses; a thing always found next to impossible with Princes (not often possible with private men), and

by no means accordant with our Duke's temperament. "Goethe contrives to make the most sensible representations," Wieland writes to Merck, "and is indeed *l'honnête homme à la cour;* but suffers terribly in body and soul from the burdens which for our good he has taken on himself. It sometimes pains me to the heart to see how good a face he puts on while sorrow like an inward worm is silently gnawing him. He takes care of his health as well as he can, and indeed he has need of it." Reports of this seem to have reached the ear of his mother, and thus he endeavours to reassure her: "You have never known me strong in stomach and head; and that one must be serious with serious matters is in the nature of things, especially when one is thoughtful and desires the good and true . . . I am, after my manner, tolerably well, am able to do all my work, to enjoy the intercourse of good friends, and still find time enough for all my favourite pursuits. I could not wish myself in a better place, now that I know the world and know how it looks behind the mountains. And you, on your side, content yourself with my existence, and should I quit the world before you, I have not lived to your shame; I leave behind me a good name and good friends, and thus you will have the consolation of knowing that I *am not entirely dead.* Meanwhile live in peace; fate may yet give us a pleasant old age, which we will also live through gratefully."

It is impossible not to read, beneath these assurances, a tone of sadness, such as corresponds with Wieland's intimation. Indeed the Duke, anxious about his health, had urged him in the September of this year to make a little journey in the Harz. He went, accompanied by Fritz von Stein, the eldest son of his beloved, a boy of ten years of age, whom he loved and treated as a son. "Infinite was the love and care he showed me," said Stein, when in manhood recording those happy days. He had

him for months living under the same roof, taught him, played with him, formed him. His instinctive delight in children was sharpened by his love for this child's mother. A pretty episode in the many-coloured Weimar life, is this, of the care-worn minister and occupied student snatching some of the holiest joys of paternity from fate which had denied him wife and children.

The Harz journey restored his health and spirits: especially agreeable to him was his intercourse with Sömmering, the great anatomist, and other men of science. He returned to Weimar to continue *Wilhelm Meister*, which was now in its fourth book; to continue his official duties; to see more and more of Herder, then writing his *Philosophy of History;* and to sun himself in the smiles of his beloved.

The year 1784 begins with an alteration in the theatrical world. The Amateur Theatre, which has hitherto given them so much occupation and delight, is now closed. A regular troupe is engaged. For the birthday of the Duchess Goethe prepares the *Planet Dance*, a masked procession; and prepares an oration for the Reopening of the Ilmenau Mines, which must greatly have pleased him as the beginning of the fulfilment of an old wish. From his first arrival he had occupied himself with these mines, and the possibility of their being once more set working. After many difficulties, on the 24th of February this wish was realized. It is related of him, that on the occasion of this opening speech, made in presence of all the influential persons of the environs, he appeared to have well in his head all that he had written, for he spoke with remarkable fluency. All at once the thread was lost; he seemed to have forgotten what he had to say. "This," says the narrator, "would have thrown any one else into great embarrassment; but it was not so with him. On the contrary, he looked for at least ten

minutes steadily and quietly round the circle of his numerous audience; they were so impressed by his personal appearance, that during the very long and almost ridiculous pause every one remained perfectly quiet. At last he appeared to have again become master of his subject; he went on with his speech, and without hesitation continued it to the end as serenely as if nothing had happened."

His osteological studies brought him this year the discovery of an intermaxillary bone in man, as well as in animals. In a future chapter* this discovery will be placed in its historical and anatomical light; what we have at present to do with it, is to recognize its biographical significance. Until this discovery was made, the structure of Man had always been separated from that of even the highest animals, by the fact (assumed) that he had *no* intermaxillary bone. Goethe, who everywhere sought unity in Nature, believed that such a difference did not exist; his researches proved him to be right. Herder was at that time engaged in proving that no structural difference could be found between men and animals; and Goethe, in sending Knebel his discovery, says that it will support this view. "Indeed man is most intimately allied to animals. The coordination of the Whole makes every creature to be that which it is, and man is as much man through the form of his upper jaw, as through the form and nature of the last joint of his little toe. And thus is every creature but *a note of the great harmony,* which must be studied in the Whole, or else it is nothing but a dead letter. From this point of view I have written the little essay, and that is properly speaking the interest which lies hidden in it."

The discovery is significant therefore as an indication of his tendency to regard Nature in her unity. It was the

* See Book v, chap. ix.

prelude to his discoveries of the Metamorphosis of Plants, and of the Vertebral Theory of the Skull: all three resting on the same mode of conceiving Nature. His Botanical studies received fresh impulse at this period. *Linnæus* was a constant companion on his journeys, and we see him with eagerness availing himself of all that the observations and collections of botanists could offer him in aid of his own. "My geological speculations," he writes to the Frau von Stein, "make progress. I see much more than the others who accompany me, because I have discovered certain fundamental laws of formation, which I keep secret, and can from them better observe and judge the phenomena before me . . . ." "Every one exclaims about my solitude, which is a riddle, because no one knows with what glorious Unseen Beings I hold communion." It is interesting to observe his delight at seeing a zebra—which was a novelty in Germany—and his inexhaustible pleasure in the elephant's skull, which he has procured for study. Men confined to their libraries, their thoughts scarcely venturing beyond the circle of literature, have spoken with sarcasm, and with pity, of this "waste of time". But—dead bones for dead bones—there is as much poetry in the study of an elephant's skull, as in the study of those skeletons of the past—History and Classics. All depends upon the mind of the student; to one man a few old bones will awaken thoughts of the great organic processes of Nature, thoughts as far-reaching and sublime as those which the fragments of the past awaken in the historical mind. Impressed with this conviction, the great Bossuet left the brilliant Court of Louis XIV, to shut himself up in the anatomical theatre of Duverney, that he might master the secrets of organization before writing his treatise *De la Connaissance de Dieu.**

* This work contains a little treatise on anatomy, which testifies the patience of the theologian's study.

But there are minds, and these form the majority, to whom dry bones are dry bones, and nothing more. "How legible the book of Nature becomes to me," Goethe writes, "I cannot express to thee; my long lessons in spelling have helped me, and now my quiet joy is inexpressible. Much as I find that is new, I find nothing unexpected; everything fits in, because I have no system, and desire nothing but the pure truth." To help him in his spelling he begins algebra; but the nature of his mind was too unmathematical for him to pursue that study long.

Science and Love were the two pillars of his existence in these days. "I feel that thou art always with me," he writes; "thy presence never leaves me. In thee I have a standard of all women, yea of all men; in thy love I have a standard of fate. Not that it darkens the world to me, on the contrary, it makes the world clear; I see plainly how men are, think, wish, strive after, and enjoy; and I give everyone his due, and rejoice silently in the thought that I possess so indestructible a treasure."

The Duke increased his salary 200 thalers, and this, with the 1,800 thalers received from the paternal property, made his income now 3,200 thalers. He had need of money, both for his purposes and his numerous charities. We have seen, in the case of Kraft, how large was his generosity; and in one of his letters to his beloved, he exclaims, "God grant that I may daily become more economical, that I may be able to do more for others." The reader knows this is not a mere phrase thrown in the air. All his letters speak of the suffering he endured from the sight of so much want in the people. "The world is narrow," he writes, "and not every spot of earth bears every tree; mankind suffers, and *one is ashamed to see oneself so favoured above so many thousands.* We hear constantly how poor the land is, and daily becomes poorer; but

we partly think this is not true, and partly hurry it away from our minds when once we see the truth with open eyes, see the irremediableness, and see how matters are always bungled and botched!" That he did his utmost to ameliorate the condition of the people in general, and to ameliorate particular sorrows as far as lay in his power, is strikingly evident in the concurrent testimony of all who knew anything of his doings. If then he did not write dithyrambs of Freedom, and was not profoundly enthusiastic for Fatherland, let us attribute it to any cause but want of heart.

The stillness and earnestness of his life seem to have somewhat toned down the society of Weimar. He went very rarely to Court; and he not being there to animate it with his inventions, the Duchess Amalia complained that they were all asleep; the Duke also found society insipid: "the men have lived through their youth, and the women mostly married." The Duke altered with the rest. The influence of his dear friend was daily turning him into more resolute paths; it had even led him to the study of science, as we learn in a letter of his to Knebel: "The natural sciences are so human, so true, that I wish everyone luck who occupies himself with them.... They teach us that the greatest, the most mysterious, and the most magical phenomena, take place openly, orderly, simply, unmagically; they must finally quench the thirst of poor ignorant man for the dark Extraordinary, by showing him that the Extraordinary lies so near, so clear, so familiar, and so determinately true. I daily beg my good genius to keep me from all other observation and learning, and guide me always on the calm definite path which the student of Nature has to tread." And Herder, also, now occupied with his great work, shared these ideas, and enriched himself with Goethe's friendship. Jacobi came to Weimar, and saw his old friend again, quitting

him with real sorrow. He was occupied at this time with the dispute about Lessing's Spinozism, and tried to bring Goethe into it, who very characteristically told him, "Before I write a syllable *μετα τα φυσικα*, I must first have clearly settled my *φυσικα*." All controversy was repugnant to Goethe's nature. "If Raphael were to paint it, and Shakspeare dramatize it, I could scarcely find any pleasure in it." And Jacobi certainly was not the writer to conquer such repugnance. Goethe objected to his tone almost as much as to his opinions. "When self-esteem expresses itself in contempt of another, be it the meanest, it must be repellant. A flippant, frivolous man may ridicule others, may controvert them, scorn them; but he who has any respect for himself seems to have renounced the right of thinking meanly of others. And what are we all that we can dare to raise ourselves to any height?" He looks upon Jacobi's metaphysical *tic* as a compensation for all the goods the gods have given him. "House, riches, children, sister and friends, and a long etc., etc., etc. On the other hand, God has punished you with metaphysics like a thorn in your flesh; me he has blessed with Science, that I may be happy in the contemplation of his works." How characteristic is this: "When you say we can only *believe* in God (p. 101), I answer that I lay great stress on *seeing (schauen)*, and when Spinoza, speaking of *scientia intuitiva*, says: *Hoc cognoscendi genus procedit ab adequata idea essentiæ formalis quorundam Dei attributorum ad adequatam cognitionem essentiæ rerum*, these few words give me courage to dedicate my whole life to the observation of things which I can reach, and of whose *essentia formalis* I can hope to form an adequate idea, without in the least troubling myself how far I can go." He was at variance, and justly, with those who called Spinoza an Atheist. He called him the most theistical of

theists, and the most Christian of Christians—*theissimum et christianissimum.*

While feeling the separation of opinion between himself and Jacobi, he still retained the bond of sympathy and friendship. It was otherwise with Lavater. Their intimacy had been great; no amount of difference had overshadowed it, until the priestly element of Lavater, formerly in abeyance, now grew into offensive prominence. He clouded his intellect with superstition, and aspired to be a prophet. He had with childish credulity believed in Cagliostro, and his miracles, exclaiming, "Who would be so great as he, had he but a true sense of the Evangelists?" He called upon that Mystifier, in Strasburg, but was at once sent about his business. "When a great man," writes Goethe of Lavater, in 1782, "has a dark corner in him, it is terribly dark." And the dark corner in Lavater begins to make him uneasy. "I see the highest power of reason united in Lavater with the most odious superstition, and that by a knot of the finest and most inextricable kind." To the same effect he says in one of the Xenien—

> Wie verführt die Natur um Hohes und Niedres im Menschen
> Zu verbinden? sie stellt Eitelkeit zwischen hinein.

It was a perception of the hypocritical nature of Lavater which thoroughly disgusted him, and put an end to their friendship; mere difference of opinion never separated him from a friend.

Amid the multiform studies,—mineralogy, osteology, botany, use of the microscope, and constant "dipping" into Spinoza,—his poetic studies might seem to have fallen into the background, did we not know that *Wilhelm Meister* has reached the fifth book, the opera of *Scherz, List, und Rache* is written, the great religious-scientific poem *Die Geheimnisse* is planned,

Elpenor has two acts completed, and many of the minor poems are written. Among these poems, be it noted, are the two songs in *Wilhelm Meister*, "*Kennst du das Land*" and "*Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt*", which speak feelingly of his longing for Italy. The preparations for that journey are made in silence. He is studying Italian, and undertakes the revision of his works for a new edition, in which Wieland and Herder are to help him.

Seeing him thus happy in love, in friendship, in work; with young Fritz living with him, to give him, as it were, a home; and every year bringing fresh clearness in his purposes, one may be tempted to ask what was the strong impulse which could make him break away from such a circle, and send him lonely over the Alps? Nothing but the egoism of genius. Italy had been the dream of his youth. It was the land where self-culture was to gain rich material and firm basis. That he was born to be a Poet, he now deliberately acknowledged; and nothing but solitude in the Land of Song seemed wanting to him. Thither he yearned to go; thither he would go.

He accompanied the Duke, Herder, and the Frau von Stein to Carlsbad in July 1786, taking with him the works to be revised for Göschen's new edition. The very sight of these works must have strengthened his resolution. And when Herder and the Frau von Stein returned to Weimar, leaving him alone with the Duke, the final preparations were made. He had studiously concealed this project from everyone except the Duke, whose permission was necessary, and, as I believe, the Frau von Stein. This latter exception is, however, open to doubt. I can scarcely believe that he would conceal from his beloved so important a project, although he may have bound her to absolute secresy; and Schöll, who has had the letters to her so long under his hands, also thinks she knew it; the only

bit of evidence against it is that Fritz von Stein expected him at Weimar for a long while after he had gone away, and lived in Goethe's house awaiting him, until the protracted solitude made him return home. It seems to me the following passage written to the Frau von Stein on the 23rd August contains sufficient proof: "I must remain another week here, and then all will end so softly, and the ripened fruit fall. And then I shall live with thee in the wide world, and be nearer our mother Earth, *in happy loneliness, with neither name nor rank.*" Now observe, first, that he must indicate a *different* mode of life by this living with her "in the wide world"; secondly, that his resolution to be alone, without even a servant, and his resolution to travel *incognito*, are very explicitly indicated. And unless the passage alludes to his projected journey, I cannot conceive the meaning of it.

If it is true that he did conceal from her the project, the reason must have been his dread of "scenes", and perhaps his fears lest she should wish to retain him. Leave-taking, as we know, was one of those painful emotions he always avoided when possible; he may have doubted the strength of his own resolution if it had to contend against her tears as well as his own sorrow.

On the 3rd September, 1786, he quitted Carlsbad, alone.

CHAPTER V.

ITALY.

The long yearning of his life was at last fulfilled: he was in Italy. Alone, and shrouded by an assumed name from all the interruptions with which the curiosity of admirers would have perplexed the author of *Werther*, but which never troubled the supposed merchant Herr Möller, he passed amid orange trees and vineyards, cities, statues, pictures and buildings, feeling himself "at home in the wide world, no longer an exile". The passionate yearnings of Mignon had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength, through the early associations of childhood and all the ambitions of manhood, till at last they made him sick at heart. For some time previous to his journey he had been unable to look at engravings of Italian scenery, unable even to open a Latin book, because of the overpowering suggestions of the language; so that Herder could say of him that the only Latin author ever seen in his hand was Spinoza. The feeling grew and grew, a mental homesickness which nothing but Italian skies could cure. We have only to read Mignon's song, "*Kennst du das Land*", which was written before this journey, to perceive how trance-like were his conceptions of Italy, and how restless was his desire to journey there.

And now this deep unrest was stilled. Italian voices were loud around him, Italian skies were above him, Italian Art allured him. He felt this journey was a new-birth. His whole being was filled with warmth and light. Life stretched itself before him calm, radiant, and strong. He saw the greatness of his aims, and felt within him powers adequate to those aims.

He has written an account of his journey; but although no man could have produced a greater work had he deliberately set himself to do so, and although some passages of this work are among the most delightful of the many pages written about Italy, yet the *Italiänische Reise* is, on the whole, a disappointing book. Nor could it well have been otherwise, under the circumstances. It was not written soon after his return, when all was fresh in his memory, and when his style had still its warmth and vigour; but in the decline of his great powers, he collected the hasty letters sent from Italy to the Frau von Stein, Herder, and others, and from them he extracted such passages as seemed suitable, weaving them together with no great care or enthusiasm. Had he simply printed the letters themselves, they would doubtless have given us a far more vivid and interesting picture; in the actual form of the work we are wearied by various trifles and incidents of the day circumstantially narrated, which in letters would not improperly find a place, but which here want the pleasant, careless, chatty form given by correspondence. In a word, it wants the charm of a collection of letters, and the solid excellence of a deliberate work. It is mainly interesting as indicating the effect of Italy on his mind; an effect apparently too deep for utterance. He was too completely possessed by the new life which streamed through him, to bestow much time in analysing and recording his impressions.

Curious it is to notice his open-eyed interest in all the geological and meteorological phenomena which present themselves; an interest which has excited the sneers of some who think a poet has nothing better to do than to rhapsodize. They tolerate his enthusiasm for Palladio, because architecture is one of the Arts; and indeed the enthusiasm which seized him in Vicenza made him study Palladio's works as if he were about to train himself for an architect; but they are distressed to find him, in Padua, once more occupied with Herder's favourite aversion—cabbages, and tormented with the vague conception of a Typical Plant, which will not leave him. Let me confess, however, that some cause for disappointment exists. The poet's yearning is fulfilled; and yet how little literary enthusiasm escapes him! Italy is the land of History, Literature, Painting, and Music; its highways are sacred with associations of the Past; its byways are centres of biographic and artistic interest. Yet Goethe, in raptures with the climate, and the beauties of Nature, is almost silent about Literature, has no sense of Music, and no feeling for History. He passes through Verona without a thought of Romeo and Juliet; through Ferrara without a word of Ariosto, and scarcely a word of Tasso. In this land of the Past, it is the Present only which allures him. He turns aside in disgust from the pictures of crucifixions, martyrdoms, emaciated monks, and all the hospital pathos which makes those galleries hideous; only in Raphael's healthier beauty and more human conceptions can he take delight. He has no historic sense enabling him to qualify his hatred of superstition by recognition of the painful religious struggles which, in their evolutions, assumed these superstitious forms. He considers the pictures as things of the present, and because their motives are hideous he is disgusted; but a man of more historic feeling would, while marking his dislike

of such conceptions, have known how to place them in their serial position in the historic development of mankind.

It is not for Literature, it is not for History, it is not for poetical enthusiasm, we must open the *Italiänische Reise*. There is no eloquence in the book; no, not even when, at Venice, he first stands in presence of the sea. Think of the feelings the first sight of the sea must call up in the mind of a poet, and then marvel at this reserve. But if the *Italiänische Reise* does not flash out in eloquence, it is everywhere warm with the intense happiness of the writer. In Venice, for example, his enjoyment seems to have been almost fabulous, as every hour the place ceased to be a *word* and became a *picture*. The canals, lagoons, narrow streets, splendid architecture, and animated crowds, were inexhaustible delights. He had brought *Iphigenia* with him to turn its prose into verse, under the influence of Raphael's St. Cecilia, which was to be his model and inspiration. From Venice he passed rapidly through Ferrara, Bologna, Florence, Arezzo, Perugia, Foligno, and Spoleto, reaching Rome on the 28th October.

In Rome, where he stayed four months, enjoyment and education went hand in hand. "All the dreams of my youth, I now see living before me. Everywhere I go I find an old familiar face; everything is just what I thought it, and yet everything is new. It is the same with ideas. I have gained no new idea, but the old ones have become so definite, living, and connected one with another, that they may pass as new." The riches of Rome are at first bewildering; a long residence is necessary for each object to make its due impression. Goethe lived there among some German artists: Angelica Kaufmann, for whom he had great regard, Tischbein, Moritz, and others. They respected his incognito as well as they could, although the fact of his being in Rome could not long be entirely concealed. He

gained however the main object of his incognito, and avoided being lionized. He had not come to Italy to have his vanity tickled by the approbation of society; he came for self-culture, and resolutely pursued his purpose.

Living amid such glories of the past, treading each day the ground of the Eternal City, every breath from the Seven Hills must have carried to him some thought of history. "Even Roman antiquities," he writes, "begin to interest me. History, inscriptions, coins, which hitherto I never cared to hear about, now press upon me. Here one reads history in quite another spirit than elsewhere; not only Roman history but world history." Yet I do not find that he read much history, even here. Art was enough to occupy him; and for Painting he had a passion which renders his want of talent still more noticeable. He visited Churches and Galleries with steady earnestness; studied Winckelmann, and discussed critical points with the German artists. Unhappily he also wasted precious time in fruitless efforts to attain facility in drawing. These occupations, however, did not prevent his completing the *Iphigenia*, which he read to the German circle, but found only Angelica who appreciated it; the others having expected something *genialisch*, something in the style of *Götz with the Iron Hand*. Nor was he much more fortunate with the Weimar circle, who, as we have already seen, preferred the prose version.

Art thus with many-sided influence allures him, but does not completely fill up his many-sided activity. Philosophic speculations give new and wondrous meanings to Nature; and the ever-pressing desire to discover the secret of vegetable forms sends him meditative through the gardens about Rome. He feels he is on the track of a law which, if discovered, will reduce to unity the manifold variety of forms. Men who have never felt the passion of discovery may rail at him for thus, in

Rome, forgetting among plants the quarrels of the Senate and the eloquence of Cicero; but all who have been haunted by a great idea will sympathize with him, and understand how insignificant is the existence of a thousand Ciceros in comparison with a law of Nature.

Among the few acquaintances he made, let us note that of Monti the poet, at the performance of whose tragedy, *Aristodemo*, he assisted. Through this acquaintance he was reluctantly induced to allow himself to be enrolled a member of the Arcadia,* under the title of *Megalio*, "*per causa della grandezza*, or rather *grandiosita delle mie opere*, as they express it."

And what said Weimar to this prolonged absence of its poet? Instead of rejoicing in his intense enjoyment, instead of sympathizing with his aims, Weimar grumbled and gossiped, and was loud in disapprobation at his neglect of duties at home while wandering among ruins and statues. Schiller, who had meanwhile come to Weimar, sends to Körner the echo of these grumblings. "Poor Weimar! Goethe's return is uncertain, and many here look upon his eternal separation from all business as decided. While he is painting in Italy, the Vogts and Schmidts must work for him like beasts of burden. He spends in Italy for doing nothing a salary of 1800 dollars, and they, for half that sum, must do double work." One reads such sentences from a Schiller with pain; and there are several other passages in the correspondence which betray a jealousy of his great rival, explicable perhaps by the uneasy, unhappy condition in which he then struggled, but which gives his admirers pain. This jealousy we shall hereafter see openly and even fiercely avowed.

* This is erroneously placed by him during his second residence in Rome. His letter to Fritz von Stein, however, gives the true date.

While Weimar grumbled, Weimar's duke in truer sympathy wrote affectionately to him, releasing him from all official duties, and extending the leave of absence as long as it might be desired. Without Goethe, Weimar must indeed have been quite another place to Karl August; but no selfishness made him desire to shorten his friend's stay in Italy. Accordingly, on the 22nd of February, Goethe quitted Rome for Naples, where he spent five weeks of hearty enjoyment. Throwing aside his incognito, he mixed freely with society, and still more freely with the people, whose happy careless *far niente* delighted him. He there made the acquaintance of Sir William Hamilton, and saw the lovely Lady Hamilton, the syren whose beauty led the noble Nelson astray. Goethe was captivated by her grace as she moved through the mazes of that shawl dance she made famous. He was also captivated in quite another manner by the writings of Vico, which had been introduced to him by his acquaintance Filangieri, who spoke of the great thinker with southern enthusiasm.

"If in Rome one must *study*," he writes, "here in Naples one can only *live*." And he lived a manifold life: on the sea-shore, among the fishermen, among the people, among the nobles, under Vesuvius, on the moonlit waters, on the buried causeway of Pompeii, in Pausilippo,—everywhere drinking in fresh delight, everywhere feeding his fancy and experience with new pictures. Thrice did he ascend Vesuvius; and as subsequently, during the campaign in France, we shall see him pursuing his scientific observations undisturbed by the cannon, so here also we observe him deterred by no perils from making the most of his opportunity. Nor is this the only noticeable trait. Vesuvius could make him forget in curiosity his personal safety, but it did not excite one sentence of poetry. His description is as quiet as if Vesuvius were Hampstead Heath.

The enthusiasm breaks out, however, here and there. At Pæstum he was in raptures with the glorious antique temples, the remains of which still speak so eloquently of what Grecian Art must have been; and in their presence he felt himself finally quit of "the distorted saints and tobaccopipe columns of Gothic Art," which once had owned his allegiance, but from which he had gradually been withdrawing himself. In Italy, his conversion from Christianism to Hellenism was completed.

Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Capua interested him less than might have been anticipated. "The Book of Nature," he says, "is after all the only one which has in every page important meanings." It was a book which fastened him as fairy tales fasten children. The sea, in ever-changing beauty, and the shores with their rich treasures were inexhaustible studies:

> "Here about the beach he wandered, nourishing a youth sublime
> With the fairy tales of science and the long result of Time."

Wandering thus lonely, his thoughts hurried by the music of the waves, the long-baffling, long-soliciting mystery of vegetable forms grew into clearness before him, and the Typical Plant was no more a vanishing conception, but a principle clearly grasped.

On the 2nd of April he reached Palermo. He stayed a fortnight among its orange trees and oleanders, given up to the exquisite sensations which, lotus-like, lulled him into forgetfulness of everything, save the present. Homer here first became a living poet to him. He bought a copy of the *Odyssey*, read it with unutterable delight, and translated as he went, for the benefit of his friend Kniep. Inspired by it, he sketched the plan of *Nausikaa*, a drama in which the *Odyssey* was to be concentrated. Like so many other plans, this was never completed. The garden of Alcinous had to

yield to the *Metamorphoses of Plants*, which tyrannously usurped his thoughts.

Palermo was the native city of Count Cagliostro, the audacious adventurer who, three years before, had made so conspicuous a figure in the affair of the Diamond Necklace. Goethe's curiosity to see the parents of this reprobate, led him to visit them, under the guise of an Englishman bringing them news of their son. He has narrated the adventure at some length; but as nothing of biographical interest lies therein, I pass on with this brief indication, adding that his sympathy, always active, was excited in favour of the poor people, and he sent them twice pecuniary assistance, confessing the deceit he had practised.

He returned to Naples on the 14th of May, not without a narrow escape from shipwreck. He had taken with him the two first acts of *Tasso* (then in prose), to remodel them in verse. He found on reading them over, that they were soft and vague in expression, but otherwise needing no material alteration. After a fortnight at Naples, he once more arrived in Rome. This was on the 6th of June 1787, and he remained till the 22nd of April 1788: ten months of labour, which only an activity so unusual as his own could have made so fruitful. Much of his time was wasted in the dabbling of an amateur, striving to make himself what Nature had refused to make him. Yet it is perhaps perilous to say that with such a mind any effort was fruitless. If he did not become a painter by his studies, the studies were doubtless useful to him in other ways. Art and antiquities he studied in company with artistic friends. Rome is itself an education, and he was eager to learn. Practice of the art sharpened his perceptions. He learned perspective, drew from the model, was passionate in endeavours to succeed with landscape, and even began to model a little in clay.

Angelica Kaufmann told him, that in Art he *saw* better than anyone else; and the others believed perhaps that "with study" he would be able to do more than see. But all his study and all his practice were vain; he never attained even the excellence of an amateur. To think of a Goethe thus obstinately cultivating a branch of Art for which he had no talent, makes us look with kinder appreciation on the spectacle so frequently presented of really able men obstinately devoting themselves to produce poetry which no cultivated mind can read; men whose culture and insight, considerable though they be, are insufficient to make them perceive in themselves the difference between aspiration and inspiration.

If some time was wasted upon efforts to become a painter, the rest was well employed. Not to mention his scientific investigations, there was abundance of work executed. *Egmont* was rewritten. The rough draft of the two first acts had been written at Frankfurt, in the year 1775; and a rough cast of the whole was made at Weimar, in 1782. He now took it up again, because the outbreak of troubles in the Netherlands once more brought the patriots into collision with the House of Orange. The task of rewriting was laborious, but very agreeable, and he looked with pride on the completed drama, hoping it would gratify his friends. These hopes were somewhat dashed by Herder, who—never much given to praise—would not accept Clärchen, a character which the poet thought, and truly thought, he had felicitously drawn. Besides *Egmont*, he prepared for the new edition of his works, new versions of *Claudine von Villa Bella* and *Erwin und Elmire*, two comic operas. Some scenes of *Faust* were written; also these poems: *Amor als Landschaftsmaler; Amor als Gast; Künstler's Erdenwallen;* and *Künstler's Apotheose.* He thus completed the redaction of the last four volumes of his Collected Works

which Göschen had undertaken to publish, and which we have seen him take to Carlsbad and to Italy, as his literary task.

The effect of his residence in Italy, especially in Rome, was manifold and deep. Foreign travel, even to unintelligent, uninquiring minds, is always of great influence, not merely by the presentation of new objects, but also, and mainly, by severing the mind from all the intricate connections of habit and familiarity which mask the real relations of life. This severance is important, because it gives a new standing-point from which we can judge ourselves and others, and it shows how routiniary is much that we have been wont to regard as essential. Goethe certainly acquired clearer views with respect to himself and his career: severed from all those links of habit and routine which had bound him in Weimar, he learned in Italy to take another and a wider survey of his position. He returned home, to all appearance, a changed man. The crystallizing process which commenced in Weimar was completed in Rome. As a decisive example, we note that he there finally relinquishes his attempt to become a painter. He feels that he is born only for Poetry, and during the next ten years resolves to devote himself to Poetry alone.

One result of his study of Art was to reconcile his theories and his tendencies. We have noted on several occasions the objective tendency of his mind, and we now find him recognizing that tendency as dominant in ancient Art. "Let me," he writes to Herder, "express my meaning in a few words. The ancients represented *existences*, we usually represent the *effect;* they pourtrayed the terrible, we terribly; they the agreeable, we agreeably, and so forth. Hence our exaggeration, mannerism, false graces, and all excesses. For when we strive after effect, we never think we can be effective enough." This admirable sentence is as inaccurate in an historical, as it is accurate in an æsthetical sense, unless by the ancients we

understand only Homer and some pieces of sculpture. As a criticism of Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Pindar, Theocritus, Horace, Ovid, or Catullus, it is quite wide of the truth; indeed, it is merely the traditional fiction current about ancient art, which vanishes on a steady gaze; but inaccurate though it be, it serves to illustrate Goethe's theories. If he found *that* in Italy, it was because that best assimilated with his own tendencies, which were eminently concrete. "People talk of the study of the ancients," he says somewhere, "but what does it mean, except that we should look at the real world and strive to express it, for that is what they did." And to Eckermann he said: "all eras in a state of decline are subjective; on the other hand, all progressive eras have an objective tendency. Our present time is retrograde, for it is subjective." Here in Rome he listens to his critical friends with a quiet smile, "when in metaphysical discussions they held me not competent. I, being an artist, regard this as of little moment. Indeed, I prefer that the principle from which and through which I work should be hidden from me." How few Germans could say this, and not blush; how few could say with him, "*Ich habe nie über das Denken gedacht;* I have never thought about Thought."

Leaving all such generalities, and descending once more to biographic detail, we meet Goethe again in the toils of an unhappy passion. How he left the Frau von Stein we have seen. Her image accompanied him everywhere. To her he wrote constantly. But he has before confessed that he loved her less when absent from her, and the length of his absence now seems to have cooled his ardour. He had been a twelvemonth away from her, when the charms of a young Milanese, with whom he was thrown together in Castel Gondolfo, made him forget the coldness, almost approaching rudeness, with which hitherto he had guarded himself from female fascina-

tion. With the rashness of a boy he falls in love, and then learns that his mistress is already betrothed. I am unable to tell this story with any distinctness, for he was nearly eighty years old when he wrote the pretty but vague account of it in the *Italiänishe Reise*, and there are no other sources come to hand. Enough that he loved, learned she was betrothed, and withdrew from her society to live down his grief. During her illness, which followed upon an unexplained quarrel with her betrothed, he was silently assiduous in attentions; but although they met after her recovery, and she was then free, I do not find him taking any steps towards replacing the husband she had lost. As may be supposed, his letters to the Frau von Stein were visibly altered: they became less confidential and communicative; a change which did not escape her.

With Herder his correspondence continues affectionate. Pleasant it is to see the enthusiasm with which he receives Herder's *Ideen*, and reads it in Rome with the warmest admiration; so different from the way in which Herder receives what *he* sends from Rome!

On the 22nd April, 1788, he turned homewards, quitting Rome with unspeakable regret, yet feeling himself equipped anew for the struggle of life. Taking *Tasso* with him to finish on his journey, he returned through Florence, Milan, Chiavenna, Lake Constance, Stuttgard, and Nürnberg, reaching Weimar on the 18th June, at ten o'clock in the evening.*

* It will be seen from this route that he never was in Genoa; consequently the passage in Schiller's correspondence with Körner (vol. iv, p. 59), wherein a certain G. is mentioned as having an unhappy attachment to an artist's model, cannot allude to Goethe. Indeed the context, and Körner's reply, would make this plain to any critical sagacity; but many writers on Goethe are so ready to collect scandals without scrutiny, that this warning is not superfluous. Vehse, for instance, in his work on the court of Weimar, has not the slightest misgiving about the G. meaning Goethe; it never occurs to him to inquire whether Goethe ever was in Genoa, or whether the dates of these letters do not point unmistakeably in another direction.

CHAPTER VI.

EGMONT.

THERE are men whose conduct we cannot approve, but whom we love more than many of those whose conduct is thoroughly admirable. When severe censors point out the sins of our favourites, reason may acquiesce, but the heart rebels. We make no protest, but in secret we keep our love unshaken. It is with poems as with men. The greatest favourites are not the least amenable to criticism; the favourites with Criticism are not the darlings of the public. In saying this we do not stultify Criticism, any more than Morality is stultified in our love of agreeable rebels. In both cases admitted faults are cast into the back-ground by some energetic excellence.

Egmont is such a work. It is far, very far, from a masterpiece, but it is an universal favourite. As a tragedy, criticism makes sad work with it; but when all is said, the reader thinks of Egmont and Clärchen, and flings criticism to the dogs. These are the figures which remain in the memory: bright, genial, glorious creations, comparable to any to be found in the long galleries of Art.

As a Drama—*i. e.*, a work constructed with a view to representation—it wants the two fundamental requisites, viz., a "collision" of elemental passions, from whence the tragic in-

terest should spring; and the "construction" of its materials into the dramatic form. The first fault lies in the conception; the second in the execution. The one is the error of the dramatic poet; the other of the dramatist. Had Shakspeare treated this subject, he would have thrown a life and character into the mobs, and a passionate movement into the great scenes, which would have made the whole live before our eyes. But I do not think he would have surpassed Egmont and Clärchen.

The slow languid movement of this piece, which makes the representation somewhat tedious, does not lie in the length of the speeches and scenes, so much as in the undramatic construction of the details. It is a novel in dialogue; not a drama. Schiller, in his celebrated review of this work, praises the art with which the local colouring of History is preserved; but I would willingly exchange this historical colouring for some touches of dramatic movement. The merit, such as it is, belongs to erudition, not to poetry; for the local colour is not, as in *Götz*, and in Scott's romances, vivid enough to place the epoch living before our eyes. Schiller, on the other hand, objects to the departure from history, in making Egmont unmarried, and to the departure from heroic dignity, in making him in love. Goethe of course knew that Egmont had a wife and several children. He rejected such historical details; and although I am disposed to agree with Schiller, that by the change he deprived himself of some powerful dramatic situations, I still think he did right in making the change. He could have made little of the powerful situations; his genius was not passionate and dramatic enough. Moreover we should then have had no Clärchen.

The character of Egmont is a type of Humanity. We are not made spectators of great actions, but of a happy nature;

the Hero, for he is one, presents himself to us in his calm strength, perfect faculties, joyous, healthy freedom of spirit, loving generous disposition; not in the hours of strenuous conflict, not in the spasms of his strength, not in the altitude of momentary exaltation, but in the *normal* condition of his nature. This presentation of the character robs the story of its dramatic collision. The tendency of Goethe's mind, which made him look upon men rather as a Naturalist than as a Dramatist, led him to prefer delineating a *type*, to delineating a *passion;* and his biographical tendency made him delineate Egmont as more like what Wolfgang Goethe would have been under the same circumstances. This same tendency to draw from his own experience also led him to create Clärchen. Rosenkranz, indeed, seeking to show the profound historical conception of this work, says, that the love for Clärchen was necessary "as an indication of Egmont's sympathy with the people"; but the reason seems to me to have been less critical, and more biographical.

It is a sombre and a tragic episode in history which is treated in this piece. The revolution of the Netherlands was one imperiously commanded by the times; it was the revolt of citizens against exasperating oppression; of conscience against religious tyranny; of the nation against a foreigner. The Duke of Alva, who thought it better the Emperor should lose the Netherlands than rule over a nation of Heretics, but who was by no means willing that the Netherlands should be lost, came to replace the Duchess of Parma in the regency; came to suppress with the sword and scaffold the rebellion of the heretics. The strong contrasts of Spaniard and Hollander, of Catholic and Protestant, of despotism and liberty which this subject furnishes, are all *indicated* by Goethe; but he has not used them as powerful dramatic elements. The characters talk, talk

well, talk lengthily; they do not act. In the course of their conversations we are made aware of the state of things; we do not dramatically assist at them.

Egmont opens with a scene between soldiers and citizens, shooting at a mark. A long conversation lets us into the secret of the unquiet state of the country, and the various opinions afloat. Compare it with analogous scenes in Shakspeare, and the difference between dramatic and non-dramatic treatment will be manifest. Here the men are puppets; we see the author's *intention* in all they say; in Shakspeare the men betray themselves, each with some peculiar trick of character.

The next scene is still more feeble. The Duchess of Parma and Machiavelli are in conversation. She asks his counsel; he advises tolerance, which she feels to be impossible: except the following indication of two characters, the whole of this scene is unnecessary; and indeed Schiller, in his adaptation of this play to the stage, lopped away the character of the Duchess altogether, as an excrescence:

Duchess. To speak candidly, I fear Orange—I fear for Egmont. Orange meditates some dangerous scheme; his thoughts are far-reaching; he is reserved, appears to accede to everything, never contradicts, and while maintaining the show of reverence, with clear foresight accomplishes his own designs.

Machiavelli. Egmont, on the contrary, advances with a bold step, as if the world were all his own.

Duchess. He bears his head proudly, as if the hand of majesty were not suspended over him.

Machiavelli. The eyes of all the people are fixed upon him, and he is the idol of their hearts.

Duchess. He has never assumed the least disguise, and carries himself as if no one had a right to call him to account. He still bears the name of Egmont. Count Egmont is the title by which he loves to hear himself addressed, as though he would fain be reminded that his ancestors were masters of Guelderland. Why does he not assume his proper title

—Prince of Gaure? What object has he in view? Would he again revive extinguished claims?

The free, careless, unsuspicous nature of Egmont is well contrasted with that of the suspicious Orange; his character is painted by numerous vivid touches, and we are in this scene made aware of the danger he is in. The scene ends as it began, in talk. The next scene introduces Clärchen and her unhappy lover Brackenburg. Very pretty is this conception of his patient love, and her compassion for the love she cannot share:

Mother. Do you send him away so soon?

Clärchen. I long to know what is going on; and besides—do not be angry with me, mother—his presence pains me. I never know how I ought to behave towards him. I have done him a wrong, and it goes to my very heart to see how deeply he feels it. Well—it can't be helped now.

Mother. He is such a true-hearted fellow!

Clärchen. I cannot help it, I must treat him kindly. *Often without a thought I return the gentle, loving pressure of his hand.* I reproach myself that I am deceiving him, that I am nourishing a vain hope in his heart. I am in a sad plight. God knows I do not willingly deceive him. *I do not wish him to hope, yet I cannot let him despair!*

Is not that taken from the life, and is it not exquisitely touched?

Clärchen. I loved him once, and in my soul I love him still. I could have married him; yet I believe I never was really and passionately in love with him.

Mother. You would have been happy with him.

Clärchen. I should have been provided for, and led a quiet life.

Mother. And it has all been trifled away by your folly.

Clärchen. I am in a strange position. When I think how it has come about, I know it indeed, and yet I know it not. *But I have only to look on Egmont, and all becomes clear to me;* yes, then even stranger things would seem quite natural. Oh, what a man he is! The provinces worship him! And in his arms am I not the happiest being alive?

Mother. And the future?

Clärchen. I ask but this—does he love me? *Does* he love me—as if there could be a doubt!"

There are reminiscences of Frederika in this simple, loving Clärchen, and in the picture of her devotion to the man so much above her. This scene, however, though very charming, is completely without movement. It is talk, not action; and the return of Brackenburg at the close, with his despairing monologue, is not sufficient for the termination of an act.

In act second we have the citizens again, and they are becoming more unruly as events advance. Vanzen comes to stir their rebellious feelings; a quarrel ensues, which is quieted by the appearance of Egmont, who, on hearing their complaints, advises them to be prudent. "Do what you can to keep the peace; you stand in bad repute already. Provoke not the King still further. The power is in his hands. An honest citizen who maintains himself industriously has everywhere as much freedom as he needs." He quits them, promising to do his utmost for them, advising them to stand against the new doctrines, and not to attempt to secure privileges by sedition. The people's hero is no demagogue. He opposes the turbulence of the mob, as he opposes the tyranny of the crown. In the next scene we have him with his secretary; and here are further manifested the kindness and the *insouciance* of his nature. "It is my good fortune that I am joyous, live fast, and take everything easily. I would not barter it for a tomb-like security. My blood rebels against this Spanish mode of life, nor are my actions to be regulated by the cautious measures of the court. Do I live only to think of life? Shall I forego the enjoyment of the present moment that I may secure the next, which, when it arrives, must be consumed in idle fears and anxieties?" This is not the language of a politician, but

of a happy man. "Take life too seriously, and what is it worth? If the morning wake us to no new joys, if the evening bring us not the hope of new pleasures, is it worth while to dress and undress? Does the sun shine on me to-day that I may reflect on yesterday? That I may endeavour to foresee and to control what can neither be foreseen nor controlled—the destiny of to-morrow?" The present is enough for him. "The sunsteeds of Time, as if goaded by invisible spirits, bear onward the light car of Destiny. Nothing remains for us but, with calm self-possession, firmly to grasp the reins, and guide the car now right, now left, here from the precipice, there from the rock. Who knows Whither he is hasting? Who reflects from Whence he came?"

Very poetic, and tragic too, is this contrast of character with circumstance. We know the peril which threatens him. We feel that this serenity is in itself the certain cause of his destruction; and it affects us like the joyousness of Romeo, who, the moment before he hears the terrible news of Juliet's death, feels "his bosom's lord sit lightly on its throne." In the scene which follows between Egmont and Orange, there is a fine argumentative exposition of their modes of looking at affairs; Orange warns him to fly while there is yet safety, but he sees that flight will hasten civil war, and he remains.

Act the third once more brings the Duchess and Machiavelli before us, and once more they talk about the troubles of the time. The scene changes to Clärchen's house, and we are spectators of that exquisite interview which Scott has borrowed in *Kenilworth*, where Leicester appears to Amy Robsart in all his princely splendour. Beautiful as this scene is, it is not enough to constitute one act of a drama, especially the *third* act; for nothing is done in it, nothing is indicated even in the development of the story which had not been indicated before;

the action stands still that we may see childish delight, womanly love, and manly tenderness.

The poetic reader, captivated by this scene, will be impatient at the criticism which espies a fault in it, and will declare such a picture infinitely superior to any dramatic effect. "What pedantry, to talk of technical demands in presence of a scene like this!" he will exclaim, and with a lofty wave of the hand dismiss the critic into contempt. Nevertheless, the critic is forced by his office to consider what are the technical demands. If the poet has attempted a drama, he must be tried by dramatic standards. However much we may delight in the picture Goethe has presented in this third act, we cannot but feel that Shakspeare, while giving the picture, would have made it subvervient to the progress and development of the piece; for Shakspeare was not only a poet, he was also a dramatic poet.

Act the fourth again shows us citizens talking about the times, which grew more and more ominous. In the next scene Alva, the terrible Alva, appears, having laid all his plans:

Alva. The moment the princes enter my cabinet, hasten to arrest Egmont's secretary. Have you made all needful preparations for securing the others?

Silva. Rest assured. Their doom, like an eclipse, will overtake them with unerring certainty.

Alva. Have you had them all narrowly watched?

Silva. All. Egmont especially. He is the only one whose bearing remains unchanged since your arrival. He passes the day on horseback, invites guests as usual, is merry and amusing at table, throws the dice, shoots, and at night steals to his mistress. The others have all made a pause in their existence; they keep within doors, and from the aspect of their houses you would imagine sickness was within."

Orange has fled, but Egmont comes. A long discussion, very argumentative but utterly undramatic, between Alva and Egmont, is concluded by the arrest of the latter.

Act the fifth shows us Clärchen in the streets trying to rouse Brackenburg and the citizens to revolt and to the rescue of Egmont. There is great animation in this scene, wherein love raises the simple girl into the heroine. The citizens are alarmed, and dread to hear Egmont named:

Clärchen. Stay! stay! Shrink not away at the sound of his name, to meet whom ye were wont to press forward so joyously! When rumour announced his approach, when the cry arose, "Egmont comes! he comes from Ghent!" then happy were they who dwelt in the streets through which he was to pass. And when the neighing of his steed was heard, did not every one throw aside his work, while a ray of hope and joy, like a sunbeam from his countenance, stole over the toilworn faces which peered from every window. Then as ye stood in doorways ye would lift up your children and pointing to him exclaim, "See! that is Egmont! he who towers above the rest! 'Tis from him ye must look for better times than those your poor fathers have known."

Shakspeare has been so often mentioned in these pages in contrast with Goethe, that we may glance for a moment at a somewhat similar psssage in *Coriolanus* to note the characteristic differences of the two styles:

"All tongues speak of him, and the *bleared sights*
Are *spectacled* to see him: your prattling nurse
Into a rapture lets her baby cry
While she chats him: the kitchen malkin pins
Her richest lockram 'bout her reechy neck,
Clambering the walls to eye him: stalls, bulks, windows,
Are smothered up, leads fill'd, and *ridges hors'd*
With variable complexions, all agreeing
In earnestness to see him: seld-shown flamens
Do press among the popular throngs, and puff
To win a vulgar station: our veil'd dames
Commit the war of white and damask in
Their nicely-gawded cheeks to the wanton spoil
Of Phœbus' burning kisses: such a pother
As if that whatsoever god, who leads him,
Were slily crept into his human powers,
And gave him graceful posture."

Clärchen, unable to rouse the citizens, is led home by Brackenburg. The scene changes to Egmont's prison, where he soliloquizes on his fate; the scene again changes, and shows us Clärchen waiting with sickly impatience for Brackenburg to come and bring her the news. He comes; tells her Egmont is to die; she takes poison, and Brackenburg, in despair, resolves also to die. The final scene is very weak and very long. Egmont has an interview with Alva's son, whom he tries to persuade into aiding him to escape; failing in this, he goes to sleep on a couch, and Clärchen appears in a vision as the figure of Liberty. She extends to him a laurel crown. He wakes—to find the prison filled with soldiers who lead him to execution.

There are great inequalities in this work, and some disparities of style. It was written at three different periods of his life; and although, when once completed, a work may benefit by careful revision extending over many years, it will be sure to suffer from fragmentary composition; the delay which favours revision is fatal to composition. A work of Art should be completed before the paint has had time to dry; otherwise the changes brought by time in the development of the artist's mind will make themselves felt in the heterogeneous structure of the work. *Egmont* was conceived in the period when Goethe was under the influence of Shakspeare; it was mainly executed in the period when he had taken a classical direction. It wants the stormy life of *Götz* and the calm beauty of *Iphigenia*. Schiller thought the close was too much in the opera style; and Gervinus thinks that preoccupation with the opera which Goethe at this period was led into by his friendly efforts to assist Kayser, has given the whole work an operatic turn. I confess I do not detect this; but I see a decided deficiency in dramatic construction, which is also to be

seen in all his later works; and that he really did not know what the drama properly required, to *be* a drama as well as a poem, we shall see clearly illustrated in a future chapter. Nevertheless, I end as I began with saying that find what fault you will with *Egmont*, it still remains one of those general favourites against which criticism is powerless.

CHAPTER VII.

RETURN HOME.

Goethe came back from Italy greatly enriched, but by no means satisfied. The very wealth he had accumulated embarrassed him, by the new problems it presented, and the new horizons it revealed:

> "For all experience is an arch wherethrough
> Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever as we move."

He had in Rome become aware that a whole life of study would scarcely suffice to still the craving hunger for knowledge; and he left Italy with deep regret. The return home was thus, in itself, a grief; the arrival was still more painful. You will understand this, if ever you have lived for many months away from the circle of old habits and old acquaintances, feeling in the new world a larger existence consonant with your nature and your aims; and have then returned once more to the old circle, to find it unchanged,—pursuing its old paths, moved by the old impulses, guided by the old lights,—so that you feel yourself a *stranger*. To return to a great capital, after such an absence, is to feel yourself ill at ease; but to return from Italy to Weimar! If we, on entering London, after a residence

abroad, find the same interests occupying our friends which occupied them when we left, the same family gossip, the same books talked about, the same placards loud upon the walls of the unchanging streets, the world seeming to have stood still while we have lived through so much, what must Goethe have felt coming from Italy, with his soul filled with new experience and new ideas, on observing the quiet unchanged Weimar? No one seemed to understand him; no one sympathized in his enthusiasm, or in his regrets. They found him changed. He found them moving in the same dull round, like blind horses in a mill.

First, let us note that he came back resolved to dedicate his life to Art and Science, and no more to waste efforts in the laborious duties of office. From Rome he had thus written to Karl August: "How grateful am I to you for having given me this priceless leisure. My mind having from youth upwards had this bent, I should never have been at ease until I had reached this end. My relation to Affairs sprang out of my personal relation to you; now let a new relation, after so many years, spring from the former. I can truly say, that in the solitude of these eighteen months I have found my own self again. But as what? As an Artist! What else I may be, you will be able to judge and use. You have shown throughout your life that princely knowledge of what men are, and what they are useful for; and this knowledge has gone on increasing, as your letters clearly prove to me: to that knowledge I gladly submit myself. Ask my aid in that Symphony which you mean to play, and I will at all times gladly and honestly give you my advice. Let me fulfil the whole measure of my existence at your side, then will my powers, like a new-opened and purified spring, easily be directed hither and thither. Already I see what this journey has done for me, how it has

clarified and brightened my existence. As you have hitherto borne with me, so care for me in future; you do me more good than I can do myself, more than I can claim. I have seen a large and beautiful bit of the world, and the result is, that I wish only to live with you and yours. Yes, I shall become more to you than I have been before, if you let me do what I only can do, and leave the rest to others. Your sentiments for me, as expressed in your letters, are so beautiful, so honourable to me, that they make me blush,—that I can only say: Lord, here am I, do with thy servant as seemeth good unto thee."

The wise Duke answered this appeal nobly. He released his friend from the Presidency of the Chamber, and from the direction of the War Department, but kept a distinct place for him in the Council, "whenever his other affairs allowed him to attend". The Poet remained the adviser of his Prince, but was relieved from the more onerous duties of office. The direction of the Bergbau Commission, and of all Scientific and Artistic Institutions he retained; among them that of the Theatre.

It was generally found that he had grown colder in his manners since his Italian journey. The process of crystallization had rapidly advanced. And beside this effect of development, which would have taken place had he never left Weimar, there was the further addition of his feeling himself at a different standing-point from those around him. The less they understood him, the more he drew within himself. Those who understood him, Moritz, Meyer, the Duke, and Herder, found no cause of complaint.

The first few weeks he was of course constantly at Court. Thus the *Hof-Courier Buch* tells us that the day after his arrival he dined at Court. This was the 19th June. Again on the 20th, 22nd, 25th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th. In July, on the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 11th, 12th, 14th, 15th,

16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st, and so on almost uninterruptedly till September. His official release made the bond of friendship stronger. Besides, every one was naturally anxious to hear about his travels, and he was delighted to talk of them.

But if Weimar complained of the change, to which it soon grew accustomed, there was one who had deeper cause of complaint, and whose nature was not strong enough to bear it —the Frau von Stein. Absence had cooled the ardour of his passion. In Rome, to the negative influence of absence, was added the positive influence of a new love. He had returned to Weimar, still grateful to her for the happiness she had given him, still feeling for her that affection which no conduct of her's could destroy, and which warmed his heart towards her to the last; but he returned also with little of that passion she had for ten years inspired; he returned with a full conviction that he had outlived it. Nor did her presence serve to rekindle the smouldering embers. Charlotte von Stein was now five-and-forty! It is easy to imagine how much he must have been struck with the change in her. Had he never left her side, this change would have approached with gradual steps, stealthily escaping observation; but the many months' absence removed a veil from his eyes. She was five-and-forty to him, as to others. In this perilous position she adopted the very worst course. She found him changed, and told him so, in a way which made him feel more sharply the change in her. She thought him cold, and her resource was—reproaches. The resource was more feminine than felicitous. Instead of sympathizing with him in his sorrow at leaving Italy, she felt the regret was an offence; and perhaps it was; but a truer, nobler nature would surely have known how to merge its own pain in sympathy with the pain of one beloved. He regretted Italy; she was not a compensation to him; she saw

this, and her self-love suffered. The coquette who had so long held him captive now saw the captive freed from her chains. It was a trying moment. But even in the worst aspect of the position, there was that which a worthy nature would have regarded as no small consolation: she might still be his dearest friend; and the friendship of such a man was worth more than the love of another. But this was not to be.

Before the final rupture, he went with her to Rudolstadt, and there for the first time spoke with Schiller, who thus writes to Körner, 12th September, 1788: "At last I can tell you about Goethe, and satisfy your curiosity. The first sight of him was by no means what I had been led to expect. He is of middle stature, holds himself stiffly and walks stiffly; his countenance is not open, but his eye very full of expression, lively, and one hangs with delight on his glances. With much seriousness his mien has nevertheless much goodness and benevolence. He is brown-complexioned, and seemed to me older in appearance than his years. His voice is very agreeable, his narrations are flowing, animated, and full of spirit; one listens with pleasure; and when he is in good humour, as was the case this time, he talks willingly and with great interest. We soon made acquaintance, and without the slightest effort; the circle, indeed, was too large, and every one too jealous of him, for me to speak much with him alone, or on any but general topics. . . . . On the whole, I must say that my great idea of him is not lessened by this personal acquaintance; but I doubt whether we shall ever become intimate. Much that to me is now of great interest, he has already lived through; he is, less in years than in experience and self-culture, so far beyond me that we can never meet on the way; and his whole being is originally different from mine, his world is not my world, our conceptions are radically different. Time will show."

Could he have looked into Goethe's soul he would have seen there was a wider gulf between them than he imagined. In scarcely any other instance was so great a friendship ever formed between men who at first seemed so opposed to each other. At this moment Goethe was peculiarly ill-disposed towards any friendship with Schiller, for he saw in him the powerful Sophist who corrupted and misled the nation. He has told us how pained he was on his return from Italy to find Germany jubilant over Heinse's *Ardinghello,* and over the *Robbers,* and *Fiesco.* He had pushed far from him, and for ever, the whole *Sturm und Drang* error; he had outgrown that tendency, and learned to hate his own works which sprang from it; in Italy he had taken a new direction, hoping to make the nation follow him in this higher region, as it had followed him before. But while he advanced, the nation stood still; he "passed it like a ship at sea." Instead of following him, the public followed his most extravagant imitators. He hoped to enchant men with the calm ideal beauty of an *Iphigenia,* and the sunny heroism of an *Egmont;* and found every one enraptured with *Ardinghello* and *Karl Moor.* His publisher had to complain that the new edition of his works, on which so much time and pains had been bestowed, went off very slowly, while the highly-spiced works of his rivals were bought by thousands.

Schüler macht sich der Schwärmer genug, und rühret die Menge
Wenn der vernünftige Mann einzelne Liebende zählt.
Wunderthätige Bilder sind meist nur schlechte Gemälde,
Werke des Geists und der Kunst sind für den Pöbel nicht da.*

In this frame of mind it is natural that he should keep aloof

* Dreamers make scholars enough, they flatter the weakness of thousands,
While the intelligent man counts his disciples by tens.
Poor indeed are the pictures famous for miracle-working:
Art in its loftiest forms ne'er can be prized by the mob.

from Schiller, and withstand the various efforts made to bring about an intimacy. "To be much with Goethe," Schiller writes in the February following, "would make me unhappy; with his nearest friends he has no moments of overflowingness: I believe, indeed, he is an Egoist, in an unusual degree. He has the talent of conquering men, and of binding them by small as well as great attentions; but he always knows how to hold himself free. He makes his existence benevolently felt, but only like a god, without giving himself: this seems to me a consequent and well-planned conduct, which is calculated to ensure the highest enjoyment of self-love. . . . Thereby is he hateful to me, although I love his genius from my heart, and think greatly of him. . . . It is a quite peculiar mixture of love and hatred he has awakened in me, a feeling akin to that which Brutus and Cassius must have had for Cæsar. I could kill his spirit, and then love him again from my heart." These sentences read very strangely now we know how Schiller came to love and reverence the man whom he here so profoundly misunderstands, and whom he judges thus from the surface. But they are interesting sentences in many respects; in none more so than in showing that if he, on nearer acquaintance, came to love the noble nature of his great rival, it is a proof that he had seen how superficial had been his first judgment. Let the reader who has been led to think harshly of Goethe, from one cause or another, take this into consideration, and ask himself whether he too, on better knowledge, might not alter his opinion.

"With Goethe," so runs another letter, "I will not compare myself, when he puts forth his whole strength. He has far more genius than I have, and greater wealth of knowledge, a more accurate sensuous perception *(eine sichere Sinnlichkeit)*, and to all these he adds an artistic taste, cultivated and sharp-

ened by knowledge of all works of Art." But with this acknowledgement of superiority there was coupled an unpleasant feeling of *envy* at Goethe's happier lot, a feeling which his own unhappy position renders very explicable. "I will let you see into my heart," he writes to Körner. "*Once for all, this man, this Goethe stands in my way,* and recalls to me so often that fate has dealt hardly with me. How lightly is *his* genius borne by his fate; and how must *I* even to this moment struggle!"

Fate had indeed treated them very differently. Throughout Schiller's correspondence we are pained by the sight of sordid cares, and anxious struggles for existence. He is in bad health, in difficult circumstances. We see him forced to make literature a trade, and it is a bad one. We see him anxious to do hack-work, and translation, for a few dollars, quite cheered by the prospect of getting such work, and farming it out to other writers, who will do it for less than he receives. We see him animated with high aspirations, and depressed by "low-thoughted care". He too is struggling through the rebellious epoch of youth, but has not yet attained the clearness of manhood, and no external aids come to help him through the struggle. Goethe, on the contrary, never knows such cares. All his life he has been shielded from the depressing influence of poverty; and now he has leisure, affluence, renown, social position—little from *without* to make him unhappy. When Schiller therefore thought of all this, he must have felt that fate had been a niggard stepmother to him, as she had been a lavish mother to his rival.

Yet Goethe had his sorrows, too, though not of the same kind. He bore within him the flame of genius, a flame which consumes while it irradiates. His struggles were with himself, and not with circumstances. He felt himself a stranger in the

land. Few understood his language; none understood his aims. He withdrew into himself.

There is one point which must be noticed in this position of the two poets, namely, that however great Schiller may be now esteemed, and was esteemed by Goethe after awhile, he was not at this moment regarded with anything beyond the feeling usually felt for a "rising young author". His early works had indeed a wide popularity; but so had the works of Klinger, Maler Müller, Lenz, Kotzebue and others, who never conquered the great critics; and Schiller was so unrecognized at this time that, on coming to Weimar, he complains, with surprise as much as with offended self-love, that Herder seemed to know nothing of him beyond his name, not having apparently read one of his works. And Goethe, in the official paper which he drew up recommending Schiller to the Jena professorship, speaks of him as "a Herr Friedrich Schiller, author of an historical work on the Netherlands." So that not only was Schiller's tendency antipathetic to all Goethe then prized, he was not even in that position which commands the respect of antagonists; and Goethe held Art as too profoundly important in the development of mankind, for differences of tendency to be overlooked as unimportant.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTIANE VULPIUS.

ONE day in the autumn of 1788, Goethe, walking in the much-loved park, was accosted by a fresh, young, bright-looking girl, who, with many reverences, handed him a petition. He looked into the bright eyes of the petitioner, and then, in a conciliated mood, looked at the petition, which entreated the great poet to exert his influence to procure a post for a young author, then living at Jena by the translation of French and Italian stories. This young author was Vulpius, whose *Rinaldo Rinaldini* has doubtless made my readers shudder in their youth. His robber romances were at one time very popular; but his name is now only rescued from oblivion, because he was the brother of that Christiane who handed the petition to Goethe, and who thus took the first step on the path which led to their marriage. Christiane is on many accounts an interesting figure to those who are interested in the biography of Goethe; and the love she excited, no less than the devotedness with which for eight-and-twenty years she served him, deserve a more tender memory than has befallen her.

Her father was one of those wretched beings whose drunkenness slowly but surely brings a whole family to want. He

would sometimes sell the coat off his back for drink. When his children grew up, they contrived to get away from him, and to support themselves: the son by literature, the daughters by making artificial flowers,* woollen work, etc. It is usually said that Christiane was utterly uneducated, and the epigrammatic pen glibly records that "Goethe married his servant". She never was his servant. Nor was she uneducated. Her social position indeed was very humble, as the foregoing indications suggest; but that she was not uneducated is plainly seen in the facts, of which there can be no doubt, namely, that for her were written the *Roman Elegies*, and the *Metamorphoses of Plants;* and that in her company Goethe pursued his optical and botanical researches. How much she understood of these researches, we cannot know; but it is certain that, unless she had shown a lively comprehension, he would never have persisted in talking of them to her. Their time, he says, was not spent only in caresses, but also in rational talk:

Wird doch nicht immer geküsst, es wird vernünftig gesprochen.

This is decisive. Throughout his varied correspondence we always see him presenting different subjects to different minds, treating of topics in which his correspondents are interested, not dragging forward topics which merely interest *him;* and among the wide range of subjects he had mastered, there were many upon which he might have conversed with Christiane, in preference to science, had she shown any want of comprehension of scientific phenomena. There is one of the *Elegies*, the eighth, which in six lines gives us a distinct idea of the sort of cleverness and the sort of beauty which she possessed; a cleverness not of the kind recognized by schoolmasters, because it does not display itself in aptitude for book-learning; a beauty

* This detail will give the reader a clue to the poem *Der neue Pausias.*

not of the kind recognized by conventional taste, because it wants the conventional regularity of feature.

> Wenn du mir sagst, du habest als Kind, Geliebte, den Menschen
> Nicht gefallen, und dich habe die Mutter verschmäht,
> Bis du grösser geworden und still dich entwickelt; ich glaub' es:
> Gerne denk' ich mir dich als ein besonderes Kind.
> Fehlet Bildung und Farbe doch auch der Blüthe des Weinstocks,
> Wenn die Beere, gereift, Menschen und Götter entzückt.*

Surely the poet's word is to be taken in such a case?

While, however, rectifying a general error, let me not fall into the opposite extreme. Christiane had her charm; but she was not a highly gifted woman. She was not a Frau von Stein, capable of being the companion and the sharer of his highest aspirations. Quick motherwit, a lively spirit, a loving heart, and great aptitude for domestic duties, she undoubtedly possessed: she was gay, enjoying, fond of pleasure even to excess, and—as may be read in the poems which she inspired—was less the mistress of his Mind than of his Affections. Her golden-brown locks, laughing eyes, ruddy cheeks, kiss-provoking lips, small and gracefully rounded figure, gave her "the appearance of a young Dionysos".† Her *naïveté*, gaiety and enjoying temperament, completely fascinated Goethe, who recognized in her one of those free, healthy specimens of Nature which education had not distorted with artifice. She was like a child of the sensuous Italy he had just quitted with so much regret; and there are few poems in any language which approach the passionate gratitude of those in which he recalls the happiness she gave him.

* "When you tell me, dearest, that as a child you were not admired, and even your mother scorned you, till you grew up and silently developed yourself; I can quite believe it. I can readily imagine you as a peculiar child. If the blossoms of the vine are wanting in colour and form, the grapes once ripe are the delight of gods and men."

† So says Madame Schopenhauer, *not* a prejudiced witness.

Why did he not marry her at once? His dread of marriage has already been shown; and to this abstract dread there must be added the great disparity of station: a disparity so great that not only did it make the *liaison* scandalous, it made Christiane herself reject the offer of marriage. Stahr reports that persons now living have heard her declare that it was her own fault her marriage was so long delayed; and certain it is that when—Christmas 1789—she bore him a child (August von Goethe, to whom the Duke stood godfather), he took her with her mother and sister to live in his house, and always regarded the connection as a marriage. But however he may have regarded it, Public Opinion has not forgiven this defiance of social laws. The world blamed him loudly; even his admirers cannot think of the connection without pain. "The Nation," says Schäfer, "has never forgiven its greatest poet for this rupture with Law and Custom; nothing has stood so much in the way of a right appreciation of his moral character, nothing has created more false judgments on the tendency of his writings than this half-marriage."

But let us be just. While no one can refrain from deploring that Goethe, so eminently needing a pure domestic life, should have found no wife whom he could avow, one who would in all senses have been a wife to him, the mistress of his house, the companion of his life; on the other hand, no one who knows the whole circumstances can refrain from confessing that there was also a bright side to this dark episode. Having indicated the dark side, and especially its social effect, we have to consider what happiness it brought him at a time when he was most lonely, most unhappy. It gave him the joys of paternity, for which his heart yearned. It gave him a faithful and devoted affection. It gave him one to look after his domestic existence, and it gave him a peace in that existence which hitherto he had sought in vain.

Oftmals hab' ich geirrt, und habe mich wieder gefunden,
Aber glücklicher nie; nun ist diess Mädchen mein Glück!
Ist auch dieses ein Irrthum, so schont mich, ihr klügeren Götter,
Und benehmt mir ihn erst drüben am kalten Gestad.*

There is a letter still extant (unpublished) written ten years after their first acquaintance, in which, like a passionate lover, he regrets not having taken something of her's on his journey —even her slipper—that he might feel less lonely! To have excited such love, Christiane must have been a very different woman from that which it is the fashion in Germany to describe her. In conclusion, let it be added that his Mother not only expressed herself perfectly satisfied with his choice, received Christiane as a daughter, and wrote affectionately to her, but refused to listen to the officious meddlers who tried to convince her of the scandal which the connection occasioned.

The *Roman Elegies* are doubly interesting: first, as expressions of his feelings; secondly, as perhaps the most perfect poems of the kind in all literature. In them we see how the journey to Italy had saturated his mind with the spirit of ancient Art. Yet while reproducing the Past with matchless felicity, he is, at the same time, thoroughly *original*. Nowhere in Greek or Roman literature do I remember this union of world-embracing thoughts, giving grandeur to the verse, with individual passion, giving it intensity. They are not simply elegies—out-pourings of individual feelings—they are *Roman* elegies, and mirror a world. In modern poems all classical recollections and allusions are for the most part frigid and labored, springing from study; not the spontaneous forms of poetic expression. In these *Roman Elegies* the classic world

* "Often have I erred, and always found the path again, but never found myself happier: now in this maiden lies my happiness! If this, too, is an error, O spare me the knowledge, ye gods, and let me only discover it beyond the grave."

lives again; indeed at times one can almost say he is more antique than the ancients.* The thirteenth elegy, *Amor der Schalk*, for example, is in Anacreon's manner, but far above anything we have of Anacreon. Antique also is the direct unmisgiving sensuousness of the poet, and his unperplexed earnestness of passion, an earnestness which does not absorb the other activities of his nature, but allies itself with them. Thus in the marvellous fifth elegy there is a picture of the most vivid sensuousness, aiding, not thwarting, the poetical activity. What a poem, what a world of emotion and thought these lines suggest:

> Ueberfällt sie der Schlaf, lieg' ich und denke mir viel.
> Oftmals hab' ich auch schon in ihren Armen gedichtet,
> Und des Hexameters Mass leise mit singernder Hand
> Ihr auf dem Rücken gezählt. Sie athmet in lieblichem Schlummer,
> Und es durchglühet ihr Hauch mir bis ins Tiefste die Brust.

This picture of the poet murmuring verses while his mistress sleeps softly by his side; warmed by her breath, yet with singing hand marking the rhythm of verse; is typical of the whole story of Goethe's love. Passion fed, it never stifled the flame of his genius. He enjoyed; but in the brief pauses of enjoyment the presence of high aims was felt.

The blending of individual passion with classic forms, thus as it were making the past live again in the feeling of the present, may be illustrated by the following example:

> Lass dich, Geliebte, nicht reu'n, dass du mir so schnell dich ergeben!
> Glaub' es, ich denke nicht frech, denke nicht niedrig von dir.
> Vielfach wirken die Pfeile des Amor: einige ritzen
> Und vom schleichenden Gift kranket auf Jahre das Herz.

* Schlegel happily says of them, "they enrich Roman poetry with German poems." *Charakteristiken und Kritiken*, II, p. 190.

Aber mächtig befiedert, mit frisch geschliffener schärfe,
Dringen die andern ins Mark, zünden behende das Blut.
In der heroischen Zeit, da Götter und Göttinnen liebten,
Folgte Begierde dem Blick, folgte Genuss der Begier.
Glaubst du, es habe sich lange die Göttin der Liebe besonnen,
Als in Idäischen Hain einst ihr Anchises gefiel?
Hätte Luna gesäumt, den schönen Schläfer zu küssen.
O, so hätt' ihn geschwind, neidend, Aurora geweckt.

Perilous as it is to place a rough plaster-cast by the side of an original, I must conform to the rule laid down of not quoting without translation, and as an approximation venture on the following:

Let not my Loved One repent that she so quickly surrendered!
Trust me, I think thee not *bold*,—think naught unworthy of thee.
Amor has manifold shafts with manifold workings: some scratch,
And with insidious steel poison the bosom for years.
Others are mightily wing'd, and, keen in new-polished sharpness,
Pierce to the innermost depths, kindling the blood into flame.
In the Heroical Age, when the gods with goddesses wantoned,
Passion was born in a glance, fruition followed desire.
Think'st thou the goddess of love "demanded time to consider",
When in Idalian groves she gazed on Anchises with joy?
Luna delaying one moment to kiss the beautiful Sleeper,
Soon had seen him awake 'neath the kiss of eager Aurora.

I dare not quote many of the finest passages, for they are as antique in their directness of expression as in other qualities. He said justly to Eckermann, that Metre is a peculiar veil which clothes the nakedness of expression, and makes that admissible which in prose would be offensive, and which even in another lighter kind of Metre would be offensive. In the *Don Juan* stanza he says the material of the *Roman Elegies* would be indelicate. On the question how far a poet is justified in disregarding the conventional proprieties of his age in the pourtrayal of feeling, let Schiller be heard: "The laws of pro-

priety are foreign to innocent nature; only the experience of corruption has given origin to them. But as soon as that corruption has taken place, and natural innocence has vanished from manners, the laws of propriety are sacred, and moral feeling will not offend them. They have the same validity in an artificial world as the laws of nature have in a world of innocence. But the very thing which constitutes the poet, is that he banishes from himself everything which reminds him of an artificial world, that he may restore nature in her primitive simplicity. And if he has done this, he is thereby absolved from all laws by which a perverted heart seeks security against itself. He is pure, he is innocent, and whatever is permitted to innocent nature is permitted also to him. If thou who readest and hearest him art no longer innocent, and if thou canst not even momentarily become so by his purifying presence, it is thy *misfortune* and not his; thou forsakest him, he did not sing for thee."

Had Goethe written nothing but the *Roman Elegies*, he would hold a first place among German poets. These elegies are, moreover, scarcely less interesting in their biographical significance. They speak plainly of the effect of Italy upon his mind. They speak eloquently of his love for Christiane. There are other tributes to her charms, and to the happiness she gave him; but were there no other tributes, these would suffice to show the injustice of the opinion which the malicious tongues of Weimar have thrown into currency respecting her; opinions, indeed, which received some countenance from her subsequent life, when she had lost youth and beauty, and when the faults of her nature had acquired painful prominence. It is Goethe's misfortune with posterity that he is mostly present to our minds as the calm old man, seldom as the glorious youth. The majority of busts, portraits, and biographic details, are

of the late period of his career. In like manner, it is the misfortune of his wife that testimonies about her come mostly from those who only saw her when the grace and charm of youth had given place to a coarse and corpulent old age. But the biographer's task is to ascertain by diligent inquiry what is the truth of the various epochs of a career, not limiting himself to one epoch; and as I have taken great pains to represent the young Goethe as he "moved, lived, and loved", so also have I tried to rescue the young Christiane from the falsifications of gossip, and the misrepresentations derived from judging her youth by her old age.

It has already been intimated that Weimar was loud in disapprobation of this new liaison; although it had uttered no word against the liaison with the Frau von Stein. The great offence seems to have been his choosing one beneath him in rank. A chorus of indignation rose. It produced the final rupture between him and the Frau von Stein. Here is a letter wherein he answers her reproaches:—"If you could but listen to me, I would gladly tell you, that although your reproaches pain me at the moment, they leave no trace of anger in my heart against you. Moreover, I can set them right. If you have much to bear from me, it is but just that I should also bear with you. It is much better that we should come to a friendly understanding, than strive constantly to come to unanimity, and when that striving fails, separate again. It is impossible to clear myself with you, because, on every reckoning I must remain your debtor. But if we consider how much we have all to bear from each other, we shall still, dearest, forgive one another. Farewell, and love—me. On the first opportunity you shall hear more about the pretty secrets."

The "pretty secrets" here alluded to are probably about

Christiane. The letter produced a reply, which called from him the following: "Thanks for thy letter, although it has troubled me in more ways than one. I delayed answering it, because it is difficult in such cases to be sincere, and not give pain . . . . What I left behind in Italy I will not now repeat; you have already repulsed my confidence on that subject in a manner sufficiently unfriendly. When I first returned, you were, unhappily, in a peculiar mood, and I honestly confess the way in which you received me was excessively painful. I saw Herder and the Duchess depart for Italy; they urgently offered me a place in their carriage, but I stayed behind for the sake of that friend for whom I had returned; and this, too, was at a moment when I was incessantly and sarcastically told that I might as well have remained in Italy,—that I had no sympathy, and so on. And all this before there was a hint of the liaison which now seems to offend you so much. And what is this liaison? Who is beggared by it? Who makes any claims on the feelings I give the poor creature? Who, on the hours I pass in her society? Ask Fritz, ask the Herders, ask anyone who knows me intimately, whether I am less sympathetic, less active, or less friendly than before? Whether I do not rather now, for the first time, rightly belong to them and to society? And it must be by a miracle indeed if I should have forgotten the best, the deepest relation of all, that, namely, to thee. How vividly I have felt my disposition to be the same, whenever it has happened that we have talked on some interesting subject! But I freely confess that the manner in which you have treated me hitherto is not to be endured. When I was inclined to talk, you shut my lips; when I was communicative about Italy, you complained of my indifference; when I was active for my friends, you reproached me with coldness and neglect of you. You criticized every look, blamed every movement, and

constantly made me feel ill at ease. How then can openness and confidence continue, while you repulse me with predetermined ill humour? I would add more, did I not fear that in your present mood it might irritate you more than it would tend to reconcile us. Unhappily you have long despised my advice with reference to coffee, and have adopted a regimen eminently injurious to your health. As if it were not already difficult enough to conquer certain moral impressions, you strengthen your hypochondria by physical aids, the evil influence of which you have long acknowledged, and out of love to me had for some time relinquished, to the obvious improvement of your health. May the present journey do you good! I do not quite relinquish the hope that you will again learn to know me. Farewell. Fritz is happy, and visits me constantly."

Over this letter she wrote *O ! ! !* It was a terrible letter to receive, and she doubtless was indignant at what she conceived to be its injustice. She had been "misunderstood". People always *are* misunderstood in such cases. They are blameless, but their conduct is misrepresented. They are conscious of having felt precisely the reverse of what is attributed to them; and they "wonder" that they are not "known better".

Shifting our position, and reading the letter less from the Frau von Stein's point of view, than from the point of view of bystanders, we read in it the amplest justification of the writer. We see how intensely unamiable must have been her manner of receiving him. Her subsequent conduct but too well confirms this impression. She showed herself worse than unamiable. The final passage of the letter alluding to her hypochondria being aggravated by coffee and bad diet, reads like an impertinence; but those who know how serious he was in his objections to the use of coffee, and how clearly he perceived the influence of physical well-being on moral health,

will not be surprised at it. At any rate, whatever accents of harshness may be heard in this letter, there is no mistaking the pain in it; and a week after, he writes the following:

"It is not easy for me to write a letter with more pain than the one I last wrote to thee, which was probably as unpleasant for thee to read as for me to write. Meanwhile at least the lips have been opened, and I hope that never may we henceforth keep them closed against each other. I have had no greater happiness than my confidence in thee, which formerly was unlimited, and since I have been unable to use it, I have become another man, and must in future still more become so. I do not complain of my present condition, I have managed to make myself at home in it, and hope to keep so, although the climate once more affects me, and will sooner or later make me unfit for much that is good. But when I think of the damp summer and severe winter, and of the combination of outward circumstances which makes existence here difficult, I know not which way to turn.* I say this as much in relation to *thee* as to myself, and assure thee that it pains me infinitely to give thee pain under such circumstances. I will say nothing in my own excuse. But I would beg thee to help me so that the relation which thou objectest to may not become still more objectionable, but remain as it is. Give me once more thy confidence; see the case from a natural point of view, let me speak to thee quietly and reasonably about it, and I dare to hope that everything between us will once more be pure and friendly. Thou hast seen my mother and made her happy; let thy return make me happy also."

He offered friendship in vain; he had wounded the self-love of a vain woman, and if, as Byron with poetic license, says—

* This is a paraphrastic abbreviation of the passage, which if given as in the original would need long collateral explanations.

"Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned,
Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned."

there is, in strict prosaic truth, a relentless venom in ignoble minds, when the self-love is wounded, which poisons friendship and destroys all gratitude. It was not enough for the Frau von Stein that he so many years had loved her with a rare devotion; it was not enough that he had been more to her boy than its own father was; it was not enough that now the inevitable change had come, he still felt tenderness and affection for her, grateful for what she *had* been to him; the one fact, that he had ceased to love her, expunged the whole past. A nature with any nobleness never forgets that once it loved, and once was happy in that love; the generous heart is grateful in its memories. The heart of the Frau von Stein had no memory but for its wounds. She spoke with petty malice of the "low person" who had usurped her place; rejected Goethe's friendship; affected to pity him; and circulated gossip about his wife. They were forced to meet; but they met no longer as before. To the last he thought and spoke of her tenderly; and when there was anything appetizing brought to table which he thought would please her, he always said, "Send some of this to the Frau von Stein."

There is a letter of her's extant which shows what was the state of her feelings after a lapse of twelve years. It may find a place here as a conclusive document with which to wind up the strange episode of their history. It is addressed to her son. Three passages are italicized by way of emphasis, to call attention to the spirit animating the writer.

"*Weimar, January* 12*th*, 1801.

"I did not know that our *former friend, Goethe*, was still so dear to me, that a severe illness, from which he has been suffering for nine days, would so deeply affect me. It is a

convulsive cough accompanied with erysipelas; he can lie in no bed, and is obliged always to be kept in a standing posture, otherwise he would be choked. His neck, as well as his face, is swollen and full of internal blisters, his left eye stands out like a great nut, and discharges blood and matter; he is often delirious, inflammation of the brain was feared, so he was bled, and had mustard foot-baths, which made his feet swell, and seemed to do him some good; but last night the convulsive cough returned, I fear from his having been shaved yesterday; my letter will tell you either of his being better or of his death—I shall not send it before. The Schillers and I have already shed many tears over him in the last few days; I deeply regret now that *when he wished to visit me on New Year's Day, I, alas! because I lay ill with headache, excused myself,* and now I shall perhaps never see him again.

"14*th.* Goethe is better, but the twenty-first day must be got over; between this and then something else might happen to him, because the inflammation has injured something in his head and his diaphragm. Yesterday he ate with great appetite some soup which I had sent him; his eye, too, is better, but he is very melancholy, and they say he wept for three hours; especially he weeps when he sees August, who has in the meantime taken refuge with me: I am sorry for the poor boy, he was dreadfully distressed, but he is already accustomed to drink away his troubles; he lately, in *a club belonging to his mother's class,* drank seventeen glasses of champagne, and I had the greatest difficulty in keeping him from wine when he was with me.

"15*th.* Goethe sent to me to-day, thanked me for my sympathy, and hoped he should soon be better; the doctors consider him out of danger, but his recovery will take a long time yet."

Who could believe that this was written by one passionately loved for ten years, and written of one who was thought to be dying? Even here her hatred to Christiane cannot restrain itself.

CHAPTER IX.

TASSO.

What Johnson said of *Comus* may be equally applied to *Tasso*, that it is a series of faultless lines, but no drama. For the full enjoyment of this exquisite work, it is necessary we should approach it with no expectation of finding the qualities demanded from a drama. It has its charm, which few will resist; but it is, with the exception of *Die Natürliche Tochter*, the weakest of Goethe's serious dramatic efforts. There is a calm broad effulgence of light in it very different from the concentrated lights of *effect*, which we are accustomed to find in modern works, and which are inseparable from the true dramatic form. It has the clearness, unity, and matchless grace of a Raphael, not the lustrous warmth of a Titian, or the crowded gorgeousness of Paul Veronese.

There is scarcely any action, and that action is only the vehicle of an internal struggle in the mind of Tasso, whose love and madness are felt to be constantly present, but are not seen flaming into dramatic effect. The tragedy is purely psychological: the fluctuation of feelings, and the quiet development of character. And this is represented through dialogue, not through action. Hence the beauty of this work lies solely in

its poetry. Unless we can feel the magic of the form, we have no more chance of being moved by it, than by a bad copy of a fine statue. Translation, however meritorious, cannot reproduce this magic; although the magic tempts translators to essay their skill. The latest and best translation is that by Miss Swanwick;* but how inadequately even that, notwithstanding its great elegance, represents the original, may be seen in the following examples.

Here is a couplet, often quoted because it so finely expresses an old truth:

> Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
> Sich ein Charakter in dem Strom der Welt.

When Miss Swanwick translates it—

> Talents are nurtured best in solitude,
> But character on life's tempestuous sea—

the reader has no objection to make to the translation, except that he feels the whole charm of the original has vanished. Again:

> Willst du genau erfahren was sich ziemt;
> So frage nur bei edlen Frauen an—

is scarcely recognizable in

> Wouldst thou define exactly what is fitting,
> Thou shouldst apply methinks to noble women.

And, to conclude:

> Nach Freiheit strebt der Mann, das Weib nach Sitte—

is not felicitously rendered by

> 'Tis order woman seeketh, freedom man.

I have purposely selected passages which, containing plain and

* In *Bohn's Standard Library*, vol. LII.

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weighty thoughts, lend themselves more to translation than the passages which charm by their poetical grace; and from these it will be evident that translation can give no adequate idea of a poem the principal charm of which lies in its grace.

The remarks just made render criticism of *Tasso* somewhat difficult. The reader will expect, however, some analysis of so important a work, and an analysis must be given, in spite of the disadvantages under which it will labour.

The moment chosen by Goethe is that when Tasso, having just completed his *Jerusalem Delivered,* gives unmistakeable signs of the unhappy passion and the unhappy malady which have made his biography one of the saddest in the long sad list of

"Mighty poets in their misery dead."

I am not sufficiently versed in this chapter of literary history to offer an opinion on the skill with which Goethe has worked historical facts into his fable; but German critics declare that he has saturated the work with such facts. Certain it is that the strictness of history has been disregarded both in the character of Alphonso, and in the tone of the whole drama. Indeed there was too close an affinity between the position of Tasso at the Court of Ferrara, and the position of Goethe at the Court of Weimar, not to make this divergence from history commanded by a desire to illustrate personal experience, and a desire not to seem to imply a sarcasm on Court protection. Had Goethe painted truly the relation between Tasso and Alphonso, the public might have read "between the lines", reflections against the Court of Weimar. Indeed, as it is, ingenuity has been fruitful in supposition: Alphonso has been regarded as representing Karl August, the Princess as Luise, Antonio as Herder, and Leonora as the Frau von Stein. It is difficult to say what amount of truth there may be in such

conjectures; for it is certain that in many of the honourable traits of Alphonso we recognize Karl August; it is certain that Goethe had a very tender regard,—not, however, approaching love,—for the Duchess; and although Herder cannot, by anyone well versed in the literary history of this period, be recognized in Antonio, yet the Frau von Stein assuredly lent some traits to Leonora. These indications, coupled with the notorious fact that Goethe always gave poetic expression to his own experience, assure us that *Tasso* contains much of personal history; but how much cannot be determined.

Tasso was commenced in the year 1777, and to that year we must recur, if we would seize the leading idea of the poem. Tasso is introduced living completely absorbed in poetry, but restlessly vague in his purposes. He lives in a small city, distinguished from all other cities by the greatness of its Princes, not by the greatness of its people.

> Ein edler Mensch zieht edle Menschen an,
> Und weiss sie fest zu halten.

He withdraws himself from the Court, and seems only happy in solitude. Antonio the diplomatist, the much experienced man, arrives, and fills the mind of Tasso with strange envy at his power and experience. In vain has the Princess taken from the bust of Virgil the laurel crown to place it on her poet's head; in vain has Alphonso expressed his deep delight at the completion of the *Jerusalem Delivered;* Tasso has heard Antonio—the Ideal has come in contact with the Real, and marvels at its greatness:

> So strangely have his nature and his words
> Affected me, that more than ever now
> A want of inward harmony I feel.*

* Throughout, the translation followed is that of Miss Swanwick.

The Princess mistakes his feeling; she thinks he is agitated by Antonio's praise of Ariosto; but he assures her:

No, that which hath most deeply mov'd my heart,
Which even now completely fills my soul,
Was the majestic picture of that world,
Which, with its living, restless, mighty, forms
Around one great and prudent man revolves,
And runs with measur'd steps the destin'd course
Prescrib'd beforehand by the demigod.
I listen'd eagerly, and heard with joy
The wise discourse of the experienc'd man;
But ah! the more I heard, the more I felt
Mine own unworthiness, and fear'd that I
Like empty sound, might dissipate in air,
Or vanish like an echo or a dream.

PRINCESS.

And yet erewhile thou didst so truly feel
How bards and heroes for each other live,
How bards and heroes to each other tend,
And toward each other know no envious thought.
Noble in truth are deeds deserving fame,
But it is also noble to transmit
The lofty grandeur of heroic deeds,
Through worthy song, to our posterity.
Be satisfied to contemplate in peace,
From a small, shelt'ring state, as from the shore,
The wild and stormy current of the world.

TASSO.

Was it not here, amaz'd, I first beheld
The high reward on valiant deeds bestow'd?
An inexperienc'd youth I here arriv'd,
When festival on festival conspir'd
To render this the centre of renown.
Oh what a scene Ferrara then display'd!
The wide arena, where in all its pomp
Accomplish'd valour should its skill display,
Was bounded by a circle, whose high worth
The sun might seek to parallel in vain.
The fairest women sat assembled there,

And men the most distinguish'd of the age.
Amaz'd the eye ran o'er the noble throng;
Proudly I cried, " And 'tis our Fatherland,
That small, sea-girded land, hath sent them here.
They constitute the noblest court that e'er
On honour, worth, or virtue, judgment pass'd.
Survey them singly, and thou'lt not find one
Of whom his neighbour needs to feel asham'd !"—
And then the lists were open'd, chargers pranc'd,
Esquires press'd forward, helmets brightly gleam'd,
The trumpet sounded, shiv'ring lances split,
The din of clanging helm and shield was heard,
And for a moment eddying dust conceal'd
The victor's honour and the vanquish'd's shame.
Oh let me draw a curtain o'er the scene,
The all too brilliant festival conceal,
That in this tranquil hour I may not feel
Too painfully mine own unworthiness !

He does not like Antonio; instinctively he feels the antagonism which must exist between their natures. He admires him—

For he possesses, I may truly say,
All that in me is wanting. But alas !
When round his cradle all the gods assembled
To bring their gifts, the Graces were not there.
And he who lacks what these fair Powers impart
May much possess and much communicate,
But on his bosom we can ne'er repose.

Prompted by this admiration, he is easily persuaded by the Princess to seek the friendship of Antonio. He does so, in a child-like impulsive way. The stern, rational Antonio has none of this enthusiasm, has no sympathy for Tasso, and rejects his advances with exasperating coldness. A quarrel ensues. Tasso, whose madness is coming on, is irritated into drawing his sword in the palace precincts. Alphonso appears, parts the antagonists, and orders Tasso to retire to his room.

This quarrel between Antonio and Tasso obviously represents the struggle in Goethe's mind between statesmanship and poetry during the first experiences of his Weimar life. The scornful coldness of Antonio is the openly declared war of politics with poetry.

The punishment which is inflicted on Tasso, trifling and purely formal as it is, acting on his already excited mental condition, developes into greater distinctness the tendencies to insanity which have previously shown themselves. He feigns to be reconciled with Antonio, whom he believes to form one of a conspiracy against him in which all are joined, and begs to be allowed to depart for Rome. His request is granted, and then follows an interview with the Princess, in which his long concealed passion flames forth. I give the scene to the conclusion:

TASSO.

'Tis thou thyself, a holy angel still,
As when at first thou didst appear to me!
The mortal's darken'd vision, oh, forgive,
If while he gaz'd, he for a moment err'd;
Now he again discerns thee, and his soul
Aspires to honour thee eternally.
A flood of tenderness o'erwhelms my heart—
She stands before me! She! What feeling this?
Is it distraction draws me unto thee?
Or is it madness? or a sense sublime
Which apprehends the purest, loftiest truth?
Yes, 'tis the only feeling that on earth
Hath power to make and keep me truly blest,
Or that could overwhelm me with despair,
What time I wrestled with it, and resolved
To banish it for ever from my heart.
This fiery passion I had thought to quell,
Still with mine inmost being strove and strove,
And in the strife my very self destroyed,
Which is to thee indissolubly bound.

PRINCESS.

If thou would'st have me, Tasso, listen to thee,
Restrain this fervid glow, which frightens me.

TASSO.

Restrains the goblet's rim the bubbling wine
That sparkling foams, and overflows its bounds?
Thine ev'ry word doth elevate my bliss,
With ev'ry word more brightly gleams thine eye.
Over my spirit's depths there comes a change;
Reliev'd from dark perplexity, I feel
Free as a god, and all I owe to thee!
A charm unspeakable, which masters me,
Flows from thy lips. Thou makest me all thine.
Of mine own being nought belongs to me.
Mine eye grows dim in the excess of light,
My senses fail me; I can scarcely stand.
Thou draw'st me to thee with resistless might,
And my heart rushes self-impell'd to thee.
Thou'st won me now for all eternity,
Then take my whole of being to thyself.

[*He throws himself into her arms, and clasps her to his bosom.*]

PRINCESS.

(Throwing him from her and retiring in haste.)

Away!

LEONORA.

(Who has for some time appeared in the back ground, hastening forward.)

What then has happen'd? Tasso! Tasso!

[*She follows the Princess.*

TASSO *(about to follow her).*

Oh God!

ALPHONSO.

(Who has for some time been approaching with Antonio.)

He is distracted, hold him fast. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.—TASSO. ANTONIO.

ANTONIO.

If that a foeman,—as thou deem'st thyself
Environ'd by a multitude of foes—
Beside thee stood, how would he triumph now?
Unhappy man? I am not yet myself!

When something quite unparallel'd occurs,
When something monstrous first arrests our sight,
The stagger'd spirit stands a moment still,
For we know nothing to compare it with.

TASSO *(after a long pause).*

Fulfil thine office, I perceive 'tis thou!
Ay, thou deserv'st the Prince's confidence.
Fulfil thine office, since my doom is seal'd,
With ling'ring tortures, torture me to death!
Draw! draw the shaft, that I may feel the barb,
That lacerates, with cruel pangs, my heart!
The tyrant's precious instrument art thou;
Ay, be his gaoler,—executioner,—
For these are offices become thee well!

Yes, tyrant, go! Thou could's not to the last
Thy wonted mask retain; in triumph go!
Thy slave thou hast well pinion'd, and reserv'd
For pre-determin'd and protracted pangs.
Yes, go! I hate thee. In my heart I feel
The horror which despotic power excites,
When it is grasping, cruel, and unjust.

[*After a pause.*

Thus, then, at last I see myself exil'd,
Turn'd off, and thrust forth, like a mendicant!
Thus they with garlands wreath'd me, but to lead
The victim to the shrine of sacrifice!
Thus, at the very last, with cunning words,
They drew from me my only property,
My poem,—ay, and they'll retain it, too!
Now is my one possession in their hands,
My bright credential wheresoe'er I went;
My sole resource 'gainst biting poverty!
Ay, now I see why I must take mine ease.
'Tis a conspiracy, and thou the head.
Thus that my song may not be perfected,
That my renown may ne'er be spread abroad,
That envy still may find a thousand faults,
And my unhonour'd name forgotten die,
I must consent forsooth to idleness,
Husband my faculties and spare myself.

Oh, precious friendship ! Kind solicitude !
Odious appear'd the dark conspiracy
Which ceaseless round me wove its viewless web,
But still more odious does it now appear !

And, thou too, Siren ! who so tenderly
Did'st lead me on with thy celestial mien,
Thee now I know ! Wherefore, oh God, so late !

But we so willingly deceive ourselves,
Still hon'ring reprobates that honour us.
True men are never to each other known ;
Such knowledge is reserv'd for galley-slaves
Chain'd to a narrow plank, who gasp for breath,
Where none hath aught to ask, nor aught to lose,
But for a rascal each avows himself,
And holds his neighbour for a rascal too,—
Such men as these perchance may know each other.
But for the rest, we courteously misjudge them,
In hopes that they'll misjudge us in return.

How long thine hallow'd image from my gaze
Veil'd the coquette, working, with paltry arts !
The mask has fallen !—Now I see Armida
Denuded of her charms,—yes, thou art she,
Of whom my bodeful verse prophetic sang !

And then the little, cunning go-between !
With what profound contempt I view her now !
I hear the rustling of her stealthy step,
As round me still she spreads her artful toils.
Ay, now I know you ! And let that suffice !
And misery, though it beggar me of all,
I'll honour still,—for it hath taught me truth.

ANTONIO.

I hear thee with amazement, though I know
How thy rash humour, Tasso, urges thee
To rush in haste to opposite extremes.
Collect thy spirit and command thy rage !
Thou speakest slander, dost indulge in words
Which to thine anguish though they be forgiven,
Thou never can'st forgive unto thyself.

TASSO.

Oh, speak not to me with a gentle lip,
Let me not hear one prudent word from thee!
Leave me my sullen happiness, that I
May not regain my senses, but to lose them.
My very bones are crush'd, yet do I live;—
Ay! live to feel the agonizing pain.
Despair enfolds me in its ruthless grasp,
And, in the hell-pang that annihilates,
These sland'rous words are but the feeble cry,
Wrung from the depth of my sore agony.
I will away! If honest, point the path,
And suffer me at once to fly from hence.

ANTONIO.

In thine extremity I will not leave thee;
And should'st thou wholly lose thy self-control,
My patience shall not fail.

TASSO.

And must I then
Yield myself up a prisoner to thee?
Resign'd I yield myself, and it is done.
I cease to struggle, and 'tis well with me.
Now let mine anguish'd heart recall how fair
What, as in sport, I've madly flung aside.
They go from hence.—Oh God! I there behold
The dust, ascending from their chariot wheels.
The riders in advance—ay, there they go
E'en to the very place from whence I came!
And now they're gone—estrang'd from me they're gone.
Oh that I once again had kiss'd his hand!
That I had still to take a last farewell!
That I could only falter out—"forgive!"
That I could hear him say,—"go, thou'rt forgiven!"
Alas! I hear it not;—I ne'er shall hear it—
Yes, I will go! Let me but say farewell,
Only farewell! Give me, oh give me back
Their long'd for presence for a single moment!
Perchance I might recover! Never more!
I am rejected, doom'd to banishment!
Alas! I am self-banished, never more

To hear that gentle voice, that tender glance
To meet no more—

ANTONIO.

Yet hear the voice of one,
Who, not without emotion, stands beside thee!
Thou'rt not so wretched, Tasso, as thou thinkest.
Collect thyself! too much thou art unmann'd.

TASSO.

And am I then as wretched as I seem?
Am I as weak as I do show myself?
Say, is all lost? Has sorrow's direful stroke,
As with an earthquake's sudden shock, transform'd
The stately pile into a ruin'd heap?
Is all the genius flown that did erewhile
So richly charm, and so exalt my soul?
Is all the power extinguish'd which of yore
Stirr'd in my bosom's depths? Am I become
A nothing? A mere nothing? No, all's here!
I have it still, and yet myself am nothing!
I from myself am sever'd, she from me!

ANTONIO.

Though to thyself thou seemest so forlorn,
Be calm, and bear in mind what still thou art!

TASSO.

Ay, in due season thou remindest me!
Hath history no example for mine aid?
Before me doth there rise no man of worth
Who hath borne more than I, that with his fate
Mine own comparing, I may gather strength.
No, all is gone! But one thing still remains;
Tears, balmy tears, kind nature has bestow'd.
The cry of anguish, when the man at length
Can bear no more—yea, and to me beside,
She leaveth melody and speech, that I
May utter forth the fulness of my woe.
Though in their mortal anguish men are dumb,
To me a God hath given to tell my grief.

[*Antonio approaches him and takes his hand.*

TASSO.

Oh, noble friend, thou standest firm and calm,

While I am like the tempest-driven wave.
But be not boastful of thy strength. Reflect!
Nature, whose mighty power hath fix'd the rock,
Gives to the wave its instability.
She sends her storm, the passive wave is driven,
And rolls, and swells, and falls in billowy foam.
Yet in this very wave the glorious sun
Mirrors his splendour, and the quiet stars
Upon its heaving bosom gently rest.
Dimm'd is the splendour, vanish'd is the calm!—
In danger's hour I know myself no longer.
Nor am I now ashamed of the confession.
The helm is broken, and on ev'ry side
The reeling vessel splits. The riven planks,
Bursting asunder, yawn beneath my feet!
Thus with my outstretch'd arms I cling to thee!
So doth the shipwreck'd mariner at last,
Cling to the rock whereon his vessel struck.

Even in this inadequate analysis the reader will perceive the ground there is for Madame de Stael's remark that "les couleurs du Midi ne sont pas assez prononcées." The piece is indeed thoroughly German; and whatever the amount of historical detail woven into it, the spirit is throughout unlike that of Italy in the days of Tasso. The Princess is a purely German figure, analysing her feelings more than she indulges in them; and Tasso, with his vacillations and reflections, would have astonished no one more than the real Torquato, whose wayward, passionate, impetuous nature would have despised the reflective, self-interrogating German. Nor would he have at all understood the German's conception of poetry as the urn wherein are contained the ashes of past sufferings, the confidant of secret thoughts. Obliged to employ a thin disguise in the expression of his sentiments for the Princess, Tasso employed a disguise as transparent as possible; and in other matters employed no disguise at all.

CHAPTER X.

THE POET AS A MAN OF SCIENCE.

TASSO was completed shortly after the rupture with the Frau von Stein. He then began the study of Kant. The *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* is written in an esoteric language he was quite unable to follow; and could he have followed it, the matter was more metaphysical than suited his tendencies; but he read *in* it, as he read in Spinoza; and the *Kritik der Urtheils-kraft*, especially in its æsthetical sections, greatly interested him. Kant was a means of bringing him nearer to Schiller, who still felt the difference between them to be profound; as we see in what he wrote to Körner: "His philosophy draws too much of its material from the world of the senses, where I only draw from the soul. His mode of presentation is altogether too sensuous for me. But his spirit works and seeks in every direction, striving to create a whole, and that makes him in my eyes a great man."

Remarkable indeed is the variety of his strivings. After completing *Tasso*, we find him writing on the Roman Carnival, and on Imitation of Nature, and studying with strange ardour the mysteries of botany and optics. In poetry it is only necessary to name the *Roman Elegies*, to show what pro-

ductivity in that direction he was capable of; although, in truth, his poetical activity was then in subordination to his activity in science. He was, socially, in an unpleasant condition; and, as he subsequently confessed, would never have been able to hold out, had it not been for his studies of Art and Nature. In all times these were his refuge and consolation.

On Art, the world listened to him attentively. On Science, the world would not listen; but turned away in silence, sometimes in derision. In both he was only an Amateur. He had no practical superiority in Painting or Sculpture to give authority to his opinions, yet his word was listened to with respect, often with enthusiasm.* But while artists and the public admitted that a man of genius might speak with some authority, although an Amateur, men of science were not willing that a man of genius should speak on *their* topics, until he had passed College Examinations and received his diploma. To this day, the veriest blockhead who has received a diploma, considers himself entitled to sneer at the "poet" who "dabbled in comparative anatomy." Nevertheless that poet made discoveries and enunciated laws, the importance of which our professional sneerer cannot even appreciate, so far do they transcend his professional knowledge.

The men of science scorned Goethe in his own day; and all but the best informed scorn him still. Nor is this unintelligible. Professional men have a right to be suspicious of facile amateurs, for they know how arduous a training is required by Science. But while it is just that they should be *suspicious*, it is absurd for them to shut their eyes. When the amateur brings forward crudities, which he announces to be

* Rauch, the sculptor, told me that among the influences of his life, he reckons the enthusiasm which Goethe's remarks on Art excited in him. Many others would doubtless say the same.

discoveries, their scorn may be legitimate enough; but when he happens to bring forward discoveries which they treat as crudities, their scorn becomes self-stultification. If their professional training gives them superiority, that superiority should give them greater readiness of apprehension. The truth is, however, that professional training gives them nothing of the sort. The mass of men, simply because they are a mass of men, receive with difficulty every new idea, unless it lies in the track of their own knowledge; and this opposition, which every new idea must vanquish, becomes tenfold greater when the idea is promulgated from a source not in itself authoritative.

When Goethe wrote his exquisite little treatise on the *Metamorphoses of Plants*,* he had to contend against the twofold obstacle of resistance to novelty, and his own reputation. Had an obscure professor published this work, its novelty would have sufficed to render it unacceptable; but the obscurest name in Germany would have had a *prestige* greater than the name of the great poet. All novelty is *prima facie* suspicious; none but the young welcome it; for is not every new discovery a kind of slur on the sagacity of those who overlooked it? And can novelty, promulgated by a Poet, be worth the trouble of refutation? The professional authorities decided that it could not. The publisher of Goethe's works, having consulted a botanist, declined to undertake the printing of the *Metamorphoses of Plants*. The work was only printed at last because an enterprizing bookseller hoped thereby to gain the publication of the other works. When it appeared, the public saw in it a pretty piece of fancy, nothing more. Botanists shrugged their shoulders, and regretted the author had not reserved his imagination for his poems. No one believed in the theory, not even his attached friends. He had to wait

* He has also a poem on this subject, but it is scarcely more poetical.

many years before seeing it generally accepted, and it was then only accepted because great botanists had made it acceptable. A considerable authority on this matter has told us how long the theory was neglected, and how "depuis dix ans (written in 1838) il n'a peut-être pas été publié un seul livre d'organographie, ou de botanique descriptive, qui ne porte l'empreinte des idées de cet écrivain illustre."* It was the fact of the theory being announced by the author of *Werther* which mainly retarded its acceptance; but the fact also that the theory was leagues in advance of the state of science in that day, must not be overlooked. For it is curious that this very theory had been briefly yet explicitly announced as early as 1759, by Caspar Frederick Wolff, in his now deservedly celebrated *Theoria Generationis*, and again, in 1764, in his *Theorie von der Generation*.† I shall have to recur to Wolff; at present it need only be noted that even *his* professional authority and remarkable power could not secure the slightest attention from botanists for the morphological theory—a proof that the age was not ripe for its acceptance.

One purpose of the present chapter would be lost if I did not fortify my statements with the authority of important writers on the special sciences; my purpose being to show that Goethe's scientific labours, received with scorn by the public, have met, at length, with recognition from the greatest authorities. "Linnæus," says M. Auguste St. Hilaire, "had thrown out a phrase which contained implicitly the doctrine of the *Metamorphoses:* he said, *Principium florum et foliorum idem est.* This aperçu Goethe elaborated into a system. But

* Auguste St. Hilaire: *Comptes Rendus des Séances de l'Acad.*, VII, 437. See also his work *Morphologie Végétale*, vol. I, p. 15.

† I have only been able to procure this latter work, which is, however, a more popular and excursive exposition of the principles maintained in the Inaugural Dissertation of 1759.

his book met with the same fate as the phrase of Linnæus—it was neglected. The savans did not read it, imagining that, coming from a poet, it could be nothing more than a reverie, written in the false poetic style of the *Loves of the Plants.* How ill they understood the genius of Goethe! that flexible genius which assumed every form, and always selected that which best suited the subject. When he wrote upon science he was grave as science itself. He had given the models of several kinds of literary composition, and he gave one for scientific composition. If his work was not accepted, it was because it appeared too soon for his contemporaries—*he had anticipated the coming era.*"*

A few of the eminent botanists of his country began, after the lapse of some years, to recognize his discovery. Thus Kieser declared it to be "certainly the vastest conception which vegetable physiology had for a long time known". Voigt expressed his irritation at the blindness of the botanists in refusing to accept it. Nees von Esenbeck, one of the greatest names in the science, in 1818 wrote, "Theophrastus is the creator of modern botany. Goethe is its tender father, to whom it will raise looks full of love and gratitude, as soon as it grows out of its infancy, and acquires the sentiment which it owes to him who has raised it to so high a position." And Sprengel, in his History of Botany, frequently mentions the theory. In one place he says, "The *Metamorphoses* had a meaning so profound, joined to such great simplicity, and was so fecund in consequences, that we must not be surprised if it stood in need of multiplied commentaries, and if many botanists failed to see its importance."

* *Morphologie Végétale*, I, 15. To the same effect Prof. Schmidt in his little work *Goethe's Verhältniss zu den organischen Wissenschaften*, p. 10. Neither of these writers is aware of Wolff's priority.

It is now, and has been for some years, the custom to insert a chapter on Metamorphosis in every work which pretends to a high scientific character. Nevertheless it is only the great authorities who speak of Goethe as he deserves.

"For a half century," says Goethe in the History of his Botanical Studies, "I have been known as a poet in my own country and abroad. No one thinks of refusing me that talent. But it is not generally known, it has not been taken into consideration that I have also occupied myself seriously through many years with the physical and physiological phenomena of Nature, observing them with the perseverance which passion alone can give. Thus when my essay on the development of plants, published nearly forty years before, fixed the attention of botanists in Switzerland and France, there seemed no expression for the astonishment at the fact of a poet thus going out of his route to make a discovery so important. It is to combat this false notion that I have written the history of my studies, to show that a great part of my life has been devoted to Natural History, for which I had a passion. It is by no sudden and unexpected inspiration of genius, but through long prosecuted studies, I arrived at my results. I might doubtless have accepted the honour which men wish to pay my sagacity, and in secret rejoiced in it. But as it is equally pernicious in science to keep exclusively to facts, or exclusively to abstract theories, I have deemed it my duty to write, for serious men, the detailed history of my studies."

He was not *much* hurt at the reception of his work. He knew how unwilling men are to accord praise to any one who aims at success in different spheres, and found it perfectly natural they should be so unwilling; adding, however, that "an energetic nature feels itself brought into the world for *its own development, and not for the approbation of the public*".

Time brought him recognition, though never perhaps will his services meet with thorough justice. And now he takes his rank among the few great Naturalists whose biographies find a place in the *Dictionnaire des Sciences Naturelles;* the writer justly remarking that "pour Goethe en effet l'étude de l'histoire naturelle ne fût pas un simple caprice, ou une distraction à ses innombrables travaux; ce fût une œuvre sérieuse et dans *laquelle il a marqué l'empreinte de son génie*. . . . Il s'y appliqua non en amateur qui se contente de notions générales, *mais en savant qui n'arrive à la généralization qu'à force de détails.*"

We shall have occasion to consider his theory of Metamorphosis hereafter; at present let us follow the biographical path, and note his confession that some of the happiest moments of his life were those devoted to these botanical studies. "They have acquired an inestimable value in my eyes," he says, "because to them I owe the most beautiful of all the relations which my lucky star shone on. To them I owe the friendship of Schiller."

Beside these botanical studies must be placed his optical studies. A more illustrative contrast can scarcely be found than is afforded by the history of his efforts in these two directions. They throw light upon scientific Method, and they throw light on his scientific qualities and defects. If we have hitherto followed him with sympathy and admiration, we must now be prepared to follow him with that feeling of pain which rises at the sight of a great intellect struggling in a false direction. His botanical and anatomical studies were of that high character which makes one angry at their cold reception; his optical studies were of that character which gives professional contempt a pretext.

He has written the history of these studies also. From

youth upwards he had been prone to theorize on painting, led thereto, as he profoundly remarks, by the very absence of a talent for painting. It was not necessary for him to theorize on poetry; he had within him the creative power. It *was* necessary for him to theorize on painting, because he wanted "by reason and insight to fill up the deficiencies of nature". In Italy these theories found abundant stimulus. With his painter friends he discussed colour and colouring, trying by various paradoxes to strike out a truth. The friends were all deplorably vague in their notions of colour. The critical treatises were equally vague. Nowhere could he find firm ground. He began to think of the matter from the opposite side—instead of trying to solve the artists' problem, he strove to solve the scientific problem. He asked himself, What is colour? Men of science referred him to Newton; but Newton gave him little help. Professor Büttner lent him some prisms and optical instruments, to try the prescribed experiments. He kept the prisms a long while, but made no use of them. Büttner wrote to him for his instruments; Goethe neither sent them back, nor set to work with them. He delayed from day to day, occupied with other things. At last Büttner became uneasy, and sent for the prisms, saying they should be lent again at a future period, but that at any rate he must have them returned. Forced thus to part with them, yet unwilling to send them back without making one effort, he told the messenger to wait, and taking up a prism, looked through it at the white wall of his room, expecting to see the whole wall coloured in various tints, according to the Newtonian statement. To his astonishment, he saw nothing of the kind. He saw that the wall remained as white as before, and that only there, where an opaque interfered, could a more or less decisive colour be observed; that the window-frames were most

coloured, while the light grey heaven without showed no trace of colour. "It needed very little meditation to discover that to produce colour a *limit* was necessary, and instinctively I exclaimed, 'Newton's theory is false!'" There could be no thought of sending back the prisms at such a juncture; so he wrote to Büttner begging for a longer loan, and set to work in real earnest.

This was an unhappy commencement. He began with a false conception of Newton's position, and thought he was overthrowing Newton when only combating his own error. The Newtonian theory does *not* say that a white surface seen through a prism appears coloured, but that it appears white, its edges only coloured. His fancied discovery stung him like a gadfly. He multiplied experiments, turned the subject incessantly over in his mind, and instead of going the simple way to work, and learning the a, b, c, of the science, tried to excogitate and experimentalize it. He had a white disc on a black ground, and this, seen through the prism, gave him the spectrum, as in the Newtonian theory; but he found that a black disc on a white ground also produced the same effect. "If Light," said I to myself, "resolves itself into various colours in the first case; then must Darkness also resolve itself into various colours in this second case." And thus he came to the conclusion that Colour is not contained in Light, but is the product of an intermingling of Light and Darkness.

"Having no experience in such matters, and not knowing the direction I ought to take, I addressed myself to a Physicist of repute, begging him to verify the results I had arrived at. I had already told him my doubts of the Newtonian hypothesis, and hoped to see him at once share my conviction. But how great was my surprise when he assured me that the phenomenon I spoke of was already known, and perfectly explained by the

Newtonian theory. In vain I protested and combated his arguments, he held stolidly to the *credo*, and told me to repeat my experiments in a *camera obscura.*"

Instead of quieting him, this rebuff only turned him away from all Physicists, that is, from all men who had special knowledge on the subject, and made him pursue in silence his own path. Friends were amused and interested by his experiments; their ignorance made them ready adepts. The Duchess Luise showed especial interest; and to her he afterwards dedicated his *Farbenlehre*. The Duke also shared the enthusiasm. The Duke of Gotha placed at his disposal a magnificent laboratory. Prince August sent him splendid prisms from England. Princes and poetasters believed he was going to dethrone Newton; men of science only laughed at his pretension, and would not pay his theory the honour of a refutation. One fact he records which is very noticeable, namely, that he could count Anatomists, Chemists, Littérateurs, and Philosophers, such as Loder, Sömmering, Göttling, Wolf, Forster, Schelling (and, subsequently, Hegel), among his adherents; but not one Physicist—*hingegen keinen Physiker!* Nor does he, in recording this fact, see that it is terribly destructive of his pretensions. What claim had Anatomists, Littérateurs, and Philosophers to be heard in such a controversy? Who would listen to a Mathematician appealing to the testimony of Zoologists against the whole body of Mathematicians past and present? There is this much, however, to be said for Goethe: he had already experienced neglect from professional authorities when he discovered the intermaxillary bone, and when, in the *Metamorphoses of Plants*, he laid before them a real discovery, the truth of which he profoundly felt. He was prepared therefore for a similar ignoring of his claims when he not only produced a new theory, but attacked the highest scientific

authority. He considered that Newtonians looked on him as a natural enemy. He thought them steadfastly bent on maintaining established prejudice. He thought they were a guild united against all innovation by common interest and common ignorance. Their opposition never made him pause; their arguments never made him swerve. He thought them profoundly in error when they imagined Optics to be a part of Mathematics; and as he did not understand Mathematics, he could not appreciate their arguments.

His *Beiträge zur Optik*, which appeared in 1791, was a sort of feeler thrown out to the great public. I must do the public the justice to say that it was utterly unsympathizing. The ignorant had no interest in such matters, and certainly would not address themselves to a poet for instruction; the well-informed saw that he was hopelessly wrong. "Everywhere," he says, "I found incredulity as to my competence in such a matter; everywhere a sort of repulsion at my efforts; and the more learned and well-informed the men were, the more decided was their opposition."

For years and years he continued his researches with a passionate patience worthy of admiration. Opposition moved him not: it rather helped to increase his obstinacy. It extorted from him expressions of irritability and polemical bad taste, which astound us in one elsewhere so calm and tolerant. Perhaps, as Kingsley once suggested to me, he had a vague feeling that his conclusions were not sound, and felt the jealousy incident to imperfect conviction. Where his conviction was perfect, he was calm. The neglect of his Metamorphoses—the denial of his discovery of the intermaxillary bone—the indifference with which his essays on Comparative Anatomy were treated—all this he bore with philosophic serenity. But on the *Farbenlehre* he was always sensitive, and in old

age ludicrously so. Eckermann records a curious conversation, wherein he brings forward a fact he has observed, which contradicts the theory of colours; and Goethe not only grows angry, but refuses to admit the fact. In this matter of Colour he showed himself morally weak, as well as intellectually weak. "As for what I have done as a poet," said the old man once, "I take no pride in it whatever. Excellent poets have lived at the same time with myself; more excellent poets have lived before me, and will come after me. But that in my century I am the only person who knows the truth in the difficult science of colours—of that, I say, I am not a little proud."

The reader will doubtless be curious to know something of this Theory of Colours; and although it must necessarily appear greatly to its disadvantage in the brief abstract for which alone I can find space, an abstract without the numerous illustrations and experiments which give the theory a plausible aspect; yet the kernel of the matter will appear.

The Newtonian theory is that white light is composed of the three, or seven colours. Instead of this, Goethe says it is not composed at all, but is the simplest and most homogeneous thing we know.* It is absurd to call it composed of *colours*, for every light which has taken a colour is darker than colourless light. Brightness cannot therefore be a compound of darkness. There are but two pure colours, *blue* and *yellow*, both of which have a tendency to become *red*, through *violet* and *orange;* there are also two mixtures, *green* and *purple*. Every other colour is a degree of one of these, or is impure. Colours originate in the modification of Light by outward cir-

* "Let us thank the gods," exclaims Schelling, "that they have emancipated us from the Newtonian spectrum (*spectrum* truly!) of composed light. We owe this to the genius to whom our debt is already so large." *Zeitschrift für specul. Philos.*, II, p. 60. To the same effect Hegel in his *Encyclopädie der Philos. Wissenschaften.*

cumstances. They are not developed *out* of Light, but *by* it. For the phenomenon of Colour, there is demanded Light and Darkness. Nearest the Light appears a colour we name *yellow;* nearest the Darkness, a colour we name *blue.* Mix these two and you have *green.*

It is not difficult to overthrow this theory of the simplicity of Light. To show that white light is really composed of the prismatic colours, we first *decompose* it into those colours by means of the prism; and if this be not enough, we can, from the prismatic colours, *recompose* white. Take a disc on which the prismatic colours are serially painted, give the disc a rapid revolution, and instead of seeing the prismatic colours you see nothing but white. Newton employed three different methods for the recomposition of white light; one of them was, "to cause the spectrum to fall upon a large lens at some distance from the prism, and then to converge all the colours into a spot, and mix them again as they were in the light before its incidence on the prism."*

Starting from the fundamental error of the simplicity of Light, Goethe undertakes to explain all the phenomena of Colour, by means of what he calls the *Opaques*—the media.

He maintains that on the one hand there is Light, and on the other Darkness; if a semi-transparent medium be brought between the two, from these contrasts and this medium, Colours are developed, contrasted in like manner, but soon through a reciprocal relation tending to a point of reunion.

The highest degree of Light seen through a medium very slightly thickened appears *yellow.* If the density of the medium be increased, or if its volume become greater, the light will gradually assume a *yellow red,* which deepens at last to a *ruby.*

* Sir David Brewster's *Life and Discoveries of Newton*, vol. I, p. 75.

The highest degree of Darkness seen through a semi-transparent medium, which is itself illuminated by a light striking on it, gives a *blue* colour; which becomes paler as the density of the medium is increased; but on the contrary becomes darker and deeper as the medium becomes more transparent. In the least degree of dimness short of absolute transparency, the deep *blue* becomes the most beautiful *violet.*

There are many interesting facts adduced in illustration. Thus, smoke appears yellow or red before a light ground, blue before a dark ground; the blue colour, at the under part of a candle-flame, is also a case of blue seen opposite a dark ground. Light transmitted through the air is yellow, orange, or red, according to the density of the air; Darkness transmitted through the air is blue, as in the case of the sky, or distant mountains.

He tells a curious anecdote in illustration of this blueness of darkness. A painter had an old portrait of a theologian to clean; the wet sponge passing over the black velvet dress, suddenly changed it to a *light blue plush.* Puzzled at this truly remarkable phenomenon, and not understanding how light blue could be the ground of deep black, he was in great grief at the thought of having thus ruined the picture. The next morning, to his joy, he found the black velvet had resumed its pristine splendour. To satisfy his curiosity, he could not refrain from wetting a corner once more, and again he saw the *blue* appear. Goethe was informed of the phenomenon, which was once more produced, in his presence. "I explained it," he says, "by my doctrine of the semi-opaque medium. The original painter, in order to give additional depth to his black, may have passed some particular varnish over it; on being washed, this varnish imbibed some moisture, and hence became semi-opaque, in consequence of which the *black* beneath immediately appeared

blue." The explanation is very ingenious; nor does the Edinburgh reviewer's answer seem to meet the question, when he says:* "As there is no gum or resin, or varnish of any kind that possesses the property of yielding blue or any other colour by being wetted, we have no doubt the varnish had been worn off, or else the picture never had been varnished." It is not a question of wetted varnish yielding blue, but of wetted varnish furnishing the medium through which black appears blue. His own explanation however is probably correct. He assumes that there was no varnish, and that the particles of bodies which produce blackness, on the usual theory, are smaller than those which produce blue or any other colour; and if we increase the size of the particles which produce blackness by the smallest quantity, they yield the *blue* colour described by Goethe. The action of the water swelled them a little, and thus gave them the size which fitted them to reflect *blue* light.

Goethe misunderstood Newton's position, as we have seen, and how he explained the phenomena of refraction may thus be briefly stated. He places a light disc, such as a circular piece of paper, upon a black ground, and looks at this disc through a prism. The disc is displaced by refraction; but the displaced mass is *yellow* on the side nearest the original white disc, and *blue* on the other side. These two appearances, blue and yellow, exhibit themselves in and upon the white; they both assume a reddish hue in proportion as they mingle with the black. Thus we perceive the primordial phenomenon of all colour occasioned by refraction. In examining the process of the experiment, we find that in one case we have extended the white edge upon the dark surface; in the other, we have extended the dark edge upon the white surface, supplanting

* *Edin. Rev.* Oct. 1840, p. 117.

one by the other, pushing the one over the other. Referring to a former experiment, showing that a dark object appears smaller than a bright one of the same size, he considers it as exhibiting a sort of conflict in regard to the retina between a light object and a dark ground, and between a dark object and its light ground. The figures thus expanded and contracted are not strongly distinguished from their ground, but appear with a kind of grey or verdigris coloured edge; in short, with an accessory image. To express his position in a sentence: the prismatic appearance is an "accessory image" corresponding exactly with the form of the object, and partaking of its other qualities, such as its brightness or its darkness.

He has supported his theory with so many excellent observations and plausible explanations, that in studying it we cannot wonder if he made some converts among men of eminence, such as Hegel, for instance. But he made a false start. He denied the fact of Light being composed of different elementary colours of unequal refrangibility, which fact is not only demonstrable both by the prismatic decomposition of Light and by its recomposition, but is also the indispensable complement to the indisputable Law of Refraction discovered by Snellius and Descartes. Not only is this fact irresistible, but the consequence drawn from it, that the relation of the sine of incidence, though constant for each colour, *varies* in the different colours of the spectrum, brings the whole question within the domain of Mathematics.

We have now reached the point where Goethe's theory can not only be disproved, but the real source of his mistake can be shown. Mathematics was the bridge over which he could not pass. Nay, he said it was impassable. Every mathematical explanation of Refraction he opposed as a mischievous prejudice; and Hegel, in his *Encyclopädie*, echoes this declaration:

"I raised the whole school of Mathematicians against me," says Goethe, "and people were greatly amazed that one who had no insight into Mathematics could venture to contradict Newton. *For that Physics could exist independently of Mathematics no one seemed to have the slightest suspicion.*" Nor has that suspicion gained yet any ground with men in the least conversant with Physics, however necessary it may sometimes have been to protest against too exclusive an employment of Mathematics. But the misconception which lies at the bottom of Goethe's polemics was a very natural one to a poet never trained in Mathematical or Experimental science, and unaware of the peculiar position occupied by Mathematics as the great Instrument of physical science. In his essay, *Ueber Mathematik und deren Misbrauch*,* he compares the philosopher employing such an instrument to a man who should invent a machine for drawing a cork, an operation which two arms and hands very easily effect; he seems to have no appreciation of the indispensable utility of this Instrument.

To make his error palpable, let us suppose a man of great intellectual acuteness and energy suddenly to light upon the idea that our Chemical theories were vitiated by a false basis—that the atomic theory was not only an hypothesis, but an hypothesis which misrepresented the order of Nature; there being, in truth, no such quantitative relations as are presupposed in that theory. Imagine the reformer setting to work, multiplying experiments, inventing explanations, disregarding all that the accumulated experience of ages had stored up on this very matter, and above all despising, as useless or worse, the very Instrument which rescues Chemistry from rough guess-work, and elevates it into the possibility of a Science—the Instrument known as the Balance. It is probable

* *Werke*, XL, p. 408.

that our reformer would make many curious observations, some of them quite new. It is probable that he would in many directions stimulate research. But it is certain that he would be hopelessly wrong in his theories, for he would necessarily be imperfect in his experiments. Without the delicate control of the Balance, chemical experiment can never become *quantitative;* and without quantitative knowledge there can be no physical science strictly so called, but only *qualitative, i. e.* approximative knowledge. No amount of observation will render observation precise unless it can be measured. No force of intellect will supply the place of an Instrument. You may watch falling bodies for an eternity, but mere watching will yield no law of gravitation. You may mix acids and alkalis together with prodigality, but no amount of experiment will yield the secret of their composition if you have flung away the Balance.

Goethe flung away the Balance. He strove by Observation and Reason to supply the place of Experiment and Mathematics. Hegel boldly says this is Goethe's merit—*das Prisma heruntergebracht zu haben.* He praises the "pure sense of Nature," which in the poet rebelled against Newton's "barbarism of Reflection." To the same effect Schelling, who does not hesitate to choose this as the very ground for proclaiming Goethe's superiority over the Newtonians, that "instead of the artificially confused and disfiguring experiments of the Newtonians, he places the purest, simplest verdicts of Nature herself before us;" he adds, it is not surprising that the blind and slavish followers of Newton should oppose researches which prove that precisely the very section of Physics, in which up to this time they have imagined the most positive, nay almost geometric evidence, to be on their side, is based on a fundamental error.*

* Schelling: *Zeitschrift für spekulative Philos.*, II, p. 60.

This point of Method, if properly examined, will help to elucidate the whole question of Goethe's aptitude for dealing with science. The native direction of his mind is visible in his optical studies as decisively as in his poetry. That direction was towards the *concrete* phenomenon, not towards abstractions. He desired to explain the phenomena of colour, and in Mathematics these phenomena disappear; that is to say, the very *thing* to be studied was hurried out of sight and masked by abstractions. This was utterly repugnant to his mode of conceiving Nature. Thus the marvellous phenomena of polarized light in the hands of Mathematicians excited his boundless scorn. "One knows not," he says, "whether a body or a mere ruin lies buried under those formulas."* The name of Biot threw him into a rage; and he was continually laughing at the Newtonians about their Prisms and Spectra, as if Newtonians were pedants who preferred their dusky rooms to the free breath of heaven. He always spoke of observations made in his garden, or with a simple prism in the sunlight, as if the natural and simple Method were so much more certain than the artificial Method of Science. In this he betrayed his misapprehension of Method. He thought that Nature revealed herself to the patient observer—

> Und was sie deinem Geist nicht offenbaren mag,
> Das zwingst du ihr nicht ab mit Hebeln und mit Schrauben.

"And what she does not reveal to the Mind will not be extorted from her by Levers and Screws." He tried by observation of Colour to get at the "open secret." Hence his failure; hence also his success; for we must not forget that if as a contribution to Optics his *Farbenlehre* is questionable, as a contribution to the knowledge demanded by Artists it is very

* *Werke*, XL, 473.

valuable. Painters have repeatedly acknowledged the advantage they have derived from it; and so impressed is Sir Charles Eastlake with its value and suggestiveness, that he has translated the dogmatic portion, accompanying it with admirable notes. The reader will do well to study this work, which will delight him in many ways; and the *History of the Theory of Colours*, not yet translated, contains much valuable information.

One remark in conclusion. Goethe incessantly declares that Newton's explanation is false, but he confines himself to the simple affirmation. *Nowhere does he attempt a refutation.* Nowhere does he show how Newton's explanation is inconsistent with the principles from which Newton argues. He is content to assert on the one hand that Newton is deplorably wrong, and on the other that his own theory suffices to explain the phenomena. But the reader waits in vain for any shadow of evidence that Newton is wrong. Goethe seems to think that the Newtonian error must be self-evident. And in truth, according to his mode of looking at Nature, the error *is* self-evident; for Newton, instead of confining himself to the concrete phenomenon, carries it into abstractions; instead of observing Nature, he "interrogates" her, puts her through the ordeal of Experiment, measures her angles, makes her declare by the aid of "Levers and Screws" what she does not reveal to the "observing Mind."

In Optics the poet shows himself *as* a poet, that is, as a man *without* the circle, fanciful because standing on no secure basis. Neither the native tendencies of his mind, nor his habits of education, fitted him for Experimental Science. His attempts in this direction are deserving of more respect than they usually meet with, for they are the attempts of a gigantic mind; but, as Bacon well says, a tortoise in the right path will beat a racer in the wrong; and Goethe was in the wrong path.

Quite other is the position he occupies in the Organic Sciences. There, his native tendencies and habits of education better fitted him to achieve success. There he could wield the great Instrument—Comparison, which is to Biology what Experiment is to Physics. There concrete Observation furnished him with the necessary materials. The poet had a keen eye and a quick comparison; in Biology both were demanded from him. The reader sees at once that not only must the Science of Life have peculiar fascination for a poetical mind, but that it demands few operations for its study which are in any degree uncongenial to the poetical mind. Hence it is that, rarely as poets have given any token of scientific capacity, they have uniformly, I believe, taken up the Organic Sciences when doing so at all. Haller, the greatest physiologist of the eighteenth century, was a poet, and one of the foremost poets of his day. Darwin was also both poet and physiologist. Among the naturalists and physiologists many have shown poetical faculty. But I remember no poetical mathematician.

Let it then be distinctly understood, and that too not on the testimony of the admiring biographer, but on some of the highest scientific testimonies in Europe, that in the Organic Sciences Goethe holds an eminent place,—eminent not because he is an eminent poet, but in spite of it. Let it be understood that in these sciences he is not to be treated as a poet, a facile amateur, but as a *thinker* who, having mastered sufficient knowledge to render his path secure, gave an impulse to the minds of contemporaries and successors, which is not even yet arrested. "En présence de faits qui attestent des études préliminaires, solides, pratiques, et poursuivies avec persévérance pendant quinze années," says Isidore Geoffroy St. Hilaire in the supplement to Buffon; "en présence de travaux aussi nombreux et continués par l'auteur presque jusque sur son lit de mort, *les*

*droits de Goethe au titre de Naturaliste ne sauraient être un instant douteux."** M. St. Hilaire adds that no one would ever have doubted it, had not Goethe been a poet; and that he himself had long entertained the old prejudice, which fell away on an attentive examination of what Goethe really had done; a prejudice resulting from "l'immense différence des conditions psychologiques qui tendent à constituer le poète et le naturaliste."

To this high testimony may be added that of the continuer of Cuvier's *Histoire des Sciences Naturelles*,† where the Essays on Comparative Anatomy are thus characterized: "On y retrouve avec étonnement *presque toutes les propositions qui ont été avancés d'une manière isolée dans ces derniers temps.*" Helmholtz, the distinguished German physiologist, in a special essay of great ability on Goethe's scientific works‡ says, "to Goethe belongs the great fame of having first conceived the leading ideas to which science in those days was tending, and through which its present form is determined." And, greater than all, here comes Richard Owen to give his authoritative verdict: "Goethe, indeed, had *taken the lead* in inquiries of this nature in his determination in 1787 of the homology of that part of the human upper maxillary bone, which is separated by a more or less extensive suture from the rest of the bone in the fœtus; and the *philosophical principles propounded in the great poet's famous anatomical essays called forth the valuable labours of the kindred spirits, Oken, Bojanus, Meckel, Carus,* and other eminent cultivators of anatomical philosophy in Germany."§

I have said that Goethe was a thinker in science, a manipu-

* *Essais de Zoologie générale*, p. 139. † Vol. v, p. 316.

‡ *Allgemeine Monatschrift*, May 1853, p. 386.

§ *Archetype and Homologies of the Vertebrate Skeleton*, p. 3. It is the

lator of scientific ideas. He was not one of those laborious and meritorious workers who with microscope and scalpel painfully collect the materials from which Science emerges. He worked, too, in his way, and everywhere sought in the order of nature for verification of the ideas which he had developed *à priori*. Do not however mistake him for a metaphysician. He was a positive thinker on the *à priori* Method; a Method vicious when the seeker rests contented with his own assumptions, or seeks only a *partial* hasty confrontation with facts—what Bacon calls *notiones temerè à rebus abstractas;* a Method eminently philosophic when it merely *goes before* the facts, anticipating what will be the tardy conclusions of experience. The *à priori* Method is a bright and brilliant instrument. It will cut your fingers if clumsily handled. It will cut deep into the truth if rightly used. Goethe looked upon nature from the heights, but having seen or fancied he saw something in the plains, he at once descended to verify the truth of his observation.

We will glance at his achievements in this field. The intermaxillary bone* was long a bone of contention among anatomists. Vesalius—one of the grandest and boldest of the early pioneers who wrote against Galen, as the philosophers wrote against Aristotle—declared, and with justice, that Galen's anatomy was not founded on the dissection of the *human* body, but on that of animals. A proof, said he, is that

more necessary to bring forward such testimonies, because unless the reader be himself somewhat familiar with the speculations of modern philosophical anatomists, he might turn to Goethe's scientific works, and not detect the wealth of thought which lies in those brief pages. Those who cannot read German, are informed that an excellent translation of all Goethe's writings on Botany and Comparative Anatomy has appeared under this title: *Œuvres d'Histoire Naturelle de Goethe.* Par C. F. Martins.

* It is the centre bone of the upper jaw—that which contains the incisor teeth.

"Galen indicates a separate bone connected with the maxillary by sutures; a bone which, as every anatomist can satisfy himself, exists only in animals." The Galenists were in arms. They could bring no fact in evidence, but *that* was of very little consequence; if facts were deficient, was not hypothesis always ready? Sylvius, for example, boldly said that man *had formerly* an intermaxillary bone. If he has it no longer, he *ought* to have it. It is luxury, it is sensuality which has gradually deprived man of this bone.* What has not luxury been made to answer for! This dispute was carried down through centuries, no one attempting to demonstrate anatomically the existence of the bone. Camper actually raised this presumed absence of the bone into the one distinguishing mark separating man from the ape; which is doubly unfortunate, for in the first place the bone is not absent in man, and in the next place in as far as it can be considered absent in man it is so in the chimpanzee, the highest of the apes.† Thus was anatomy a treacherous ally in this question, although Camper knew not how treacherous.

This slight historical sketch will serve to show that the discovery, if not important, was at least far from easy; indeed so little did it lie in the track of general knowledge, that it was at first received with contemptuous disbelief, even from men so eminent as Blumenbach,‡ and it was forty years gaining

* This same Sylvius it was who replied to Vesalius that Galen was not wrong when he described man as having seven bones in his sternum (there are only three): "for," said he, "in ancient times the robust chests of heroes might very well have had more bones than our degenerate day can boast." It is impossible to decide upon what might have been; but the mummies are ancient enough, and they have no more bones than we.

† Blumenbach had already noted (in his *De Generis Humani Var. Nat.*), that in some young apes and baboons no trace was discoverable of the bone.

‡ See his *Comparative Anatomy*, translated by Lawrence; and the translator's note, p. 60.

general acceptance, although Loder, Spix, and Sömmering at once recognized it. Camper, to whom Goethe sent the manuscript, found that it was *très élégant, admirablement bien écrit, c'est à dire d'une main admirable*, but thought a better Latin style desirable! Goethe began to despise the pedantry of professional men who would deny the testimony of their five senses in favour of an old doctrine; and he admirably says, "the phrases men are accustomed to repeat incessantly end by becoming convictions, *and ossify the organs of intelligence.*"

The most remarkable point in this discovery is less the discovery than the Method which led to it. The intermaxillary bone in animals contains the incisor teeth. Man has incisor teeth; and Goethe, fully impressed with the conviction that there was Unity in Nature, boldly said, if Man has the teeth in common with animals, he must have the bone in common with animals. Anatomists, lost in details, and wanting that fundamental conception which now underlies all philosophical anatomy, saw no abstract necessity for such identity of composition; the more so, as *evidence* seemed wholly against it. But Goethe was not only guided by the truer philosophic conception, he was also instinctively led to the true Method of demonstration, namely, the Comparison of the various modifications which this bone underwent in the animal series. This Method has now become *the* Method; and we require to throw ourselves into the historical position to appreciate its novelty, at the time he employed it. He found on comparison that the bone varied with the nutrition of the animal, and the size of its teeth. He found, moreover, that in some animals the bone was not separated from the jaw; and in children the sutures were traceable. He admitted that seen from the front no trace of the sutures was visible, but on the interior there were unmistakeable traces. Examination of the fœtal skull has

since set the point beyond dispute. I have seen one where the bone was distinctly separated; and I possess the skull of a female, the ossification of which is far advanced at the parietal sutures, yet internally the traces of the intermaxillary are visible.

Goethe made his discovery in 1784, and communicated it to several anatomists. Loder mentions it in his *Compendium* in 1787. The date is significant as showing how simultaneous discoveries often are, and how cautiously we should admit the charge of plagiarism in science. In 1786 the great French anatomist, Vicq d'Azyr, published his *Traité d'Anatomie et de Physiologie.*. In this work there is not only a distinct *aperçu* (no demonstration) of the presence of the intermaxillary bone in man, but the fact is adduced in support of the general conception of a Type. "Peut-on s'y refuser enfin, en comparant les os maxillaires antérieurs que j'appelle *incisifs* dans les quadrupèdes, avec cette pièce osseuse qui soutient les dents incisives supérieures dans l'homme, où elle est séparée de l'os maxillaire par une petite fêlure très remarquable dans les fœtus, à peine visible dans les adultes, et dont personne n'avait connu l'usage."* Here we have a coincidence in doctrine as well as a coincidence in discovery. That Goethe did not borrow from Vicq d'Azyr is proved in this decisive passage from a letter written by Sömmering to Merck:† "I have expressed my opinion on Vicq d'Azyr's work in the *Götting. Gelehrt. Anzeig.* It is the best we have. But, as far as the work has yet gone, Goethe is not mentioned in it." To conclude these details let us note, as a specimen of the slowness with which discoveries travelled in those days from Germany to

* From a note to Blumenbach's *Comparative Anatomy* (p. 19), it seems as if Vicq d'Azyr had made this observation as early as 1780.

† *Briefe an Merck*, p. 493.

France, that Geoffroy St. Hilaire, who was nobly working out conceptions of Philosophical Anatomy in a spirit so identical with that of Goethe, was utterly unconscious of the existence of a fellow-labourer across the Rhine, and noticing the monograph of G. Fischer, said, "*Gœthes* aurait le premier découvert l'interpariétal dans quelques rongeurs, et se serait contenté d'en faire mention par une note manuscrite sur un exemplaire d'un traité d'anatomie comparée."*

If some reader may think too much space has been given to this topic, I am sure the scientific reader will absolve me, and I am sure that no one interested in following the development of Goethe's mind will be indifferent to a point which so curiously illustrates the paradox of a great poet achieving success in science. The discovery of the intermaxillary bone was not in itself important. It would have been made by another, sooner or later; for the Comparative Method which was then "in the air" must necessarily have led to it. Its importance in Goethe's biography is its illustration of his early and successful conception of that Method. I cannot, I confess, agree with Carus when he attributes to Goethe the creation of that Method;† but I think his position in the History of Anatomy a much loftier one than is usually awarded him. To this point we shall have to recur presently; meanwhile we may pass to his second achievement—to the doctrine of Morphology.

Place a flower in the hands of the cleverest man of your acquaintance, providing always he has not read modern works of science, and assure him that leaf, calyx, corolla, bud, pistil,

* *Philosophie Anatomique*, II, p. 55. Geoffroy was afterwards very proud to have the suffrage of *Gœthes;* and Geoffroy's son has spoken most honourably of the coincidence between the speculations of his father and the poet.

† Vicq d'Azyr had already published his *Traité d'Anatomie*, in which the leading principles are luminously set forth.

and stamen, differing as they do in colour and in form, are nevertheless all modified leaves; assure him that flower and fruit are but modifications of one typical form, which is the leaf; and if he has any confidence in your knowledge he may accept the statement, but assuredly it will seem to him a most incomprehensible paradox. Place him before a human skeleton, and, calling his attention to its manifold forms, assure him that every single bone is either part of a vertebra, or the appendage to a vertebra, and that the skull is a congeries of four vertebræ under various modifications; he will, as before, accept your statement, perhaps; but he will, as before, think it one of the refinements of transcendental speculation to be arrived at only by philosophers. Yet both of these astounding propositions are first principles in Morphology; and in the History of Science both of these propositions are to be traced to Goethe. Botanists and Anatomists have, of course, greatly modified the views he promulgated, and have substituted views nearer and nearer the truth, without yet being quite at one. But he gave the impulse to their efforts.

I have placed the vertebral theory in juxta-position with the theory of plant-metamorphosis, because the advance of science has made one profound breach in the Metamorphosis theory, by the discovery of an organ much simpler, and much more universal than the leaf. This organ is the *cell*. There are many plants without leaves, or traces of leaf. There is no plant which does not originate in a cell, or which is not composed of groups of cells variously modified. The one primitive, universal organ of the vegetable world is clearly not the leaf, but the cell. The leaf, so far from being primitive, is itself secondary and complex. In Goethe's day there was no suspicion of such an universal organ as the cell; and since its discovery by Schleiden, there seems to have been a pretty

general feeling that Goethe's theory was disposed of. But if I may venture to put forth an opinion on this delicate matter—and I do so only by carrying the matter out of court, so to speak, to plead it in the higher court of biological philosophy—the cell-theory affects the theory of Metamorphosis only by *limiting* it. In destroying the universality of the leaf, as a primitive organ, it still allows the leaf to be the typical form from which other forms are modified in those plants which have leaves. It enables analysis to go deeper, and gives a new form to the science. The cell is the fundamental organ of animals and of plants; and those who maintain the doctrine of the typical leaf are in an analogous position to those who hold the typical vertebra. A botanist may show the one that there are simple cellular plants—plants which have no leaves at all. A zoologist may shew the other that there are invertebrate animals—animals indeed with no skeleton at all. In both cases the defender of types may answer: very true, my type is not universal, but wherever you find an animal with an internal skeleton, you will find the skeleton is constructed on the vertebral type; and wherever you find a plant with leaves you will find all its organs are modified leaves.

It is impossible to be even superficially acquainted with biological speculations, and not recognize the immense importance of the creation of a Type. As Helmholtz truly observes, "the labours of botanists and zoologists did little more than collect materials, until they learned to dispose them in such a series that the laws of dependence and a generalized type could be elicited." Here the great mind of our poet found a field suited to it; and the time was favourable. Enough material had been collected in botany and comparative anatomy for a clear survey to be taken; and although his contemporaries all wandered without a compass, or contented themselves with

a dry registration of facts, he was able to introduce into science two leading ideas of infinite fruitfulness."

Although the creation of a Type belongs to Goethe, and although he is justly regarded as the founder of the science of Morphology, I am anxious that full justice should be done to his forerunner, Wolff, one of the greatest thinkers Biology has had, but whose speculations were too far in advance of his age to meet with recognition. In 1817 Goethe published with evident pride the fact that he had been preceded by Wolff, whose works he learned to know, some years after the publication of his own.* It is clear, from the differences in their views and treatment, that Goethe did not borrow his theory from Wolff; nor do I think he quite understands Wolff. After citing a passage from Meckel's translation, in which Wolff states the identity of all the various organs of a plant, he criticizes what he regards as Wolff's shortcoming, viz., the non-recognition of an alternation of contraction and expansion—a criticism which shows his peculiarly morphological point of view; whereas Wolff's method was physiological, not morphological. He complains that Wolff has lost the route which would infallibly have conducted him to the metamorphoses of animals. But the truth is, Wolff does show the identity of the process in plants and animals.†

We do not take from the credit of Columbus by showing that five centuries before he discovered the New World, Scandinavian voyagers had repeatedly touched on those shores; nor do we diminish the value of Goethe's contribution to Science, by showing that before him Wolff had perceived the

* *Werke*, xxvi, p. 105.

† *Theorie von der Generation*, § 64. The section concludes with these words: "Kurz die Fledermaus ist ein volkommnes Blatt! das hätten Sie ihr wohl nicht angesehn. Allein die Aehnlichkeit ist nicht chimärisch, denn die Entstehungsart der beyden Dinge ist einerley."

identity of the various organs of the plant. It was not the purpose of the Scandinavians to discover the New World. They did not make their discovery a possession for mankind. Neither was it Wolff's purpose to create a new theory in Botany. He discovered a process of nature while he was seeking the laws of Epigenesis, and he only used his discovery as one of several illustrations. Columbus set out with the distinct purpose of discovery, and made his discovery a possession for all time. So also Goethe set out with a distinct purpose, and Botanists justly declare that to his work they owe the idea of plant metamorphosis. His work is very beautiful, and may be read without any previous scientific training. It traces the metamorphoses of the grain into the leaf, and thence into the flower. The morphological part is perfect, but he hampers himself with a physiological hypothesis. Every segment proceeding immediately from that which goes before it, receiving its nourishment through all the segments which have gone before, must, he says, be more perfect, and must send to its leaves and buds a more elaborated sap. The result is that the coarser fluids are rejected, the finer attracted, and the plant grows more and more perfect till it reaches its point of culmination.

This hypothesis of a more elaborated sap, reaching the ultimate segments, is in direct contradiction to the hypothesis of Wolff. He, too, declares the flower to be modified leaves; but how modified? he asks.* They are modified because they are imperfect. Their development has been arrested. They are smaller, have less sap, the sap has lost its chlorophyl, and the colour of the flower is an evidence of *imperfection*. I cannot stop to consider Wolff's ingenious arguments by which he endeavours to show that flowering and fructification are arrests of development. It is enough to indicate the contrast

* *Theorie von der Generation*, § 80, sq.

between his and Goethe's views. Both are agreed that inasmuch as a differentiation does take place, it must have some cause; but the cause is by Wolff said to be deficiency of sap, by Goethe elaborated sap.

Goethe agrees with Wolff as regards the passage of the leaf into the flower depending on the acceleration or retardation of the sap. It had been noticed by Linnæus that a too abundant supply of food retards the flowering, and accelerates the growth of leaves; whereas a moderate supply, nay even an approach to starvation, accelerates the flowering and diminishes the number of leaves. Wolff attributes this simply to the fact that so long as there is abundant nutriment there will be abundant growth, and no arrest in the shape of imperfect leaves (*i. e.* flowers); and when nutriment is scanty, the arrest soon takes place. But unfortunately for this opinion, and indeed for the opinion that flowers are imperfect leaves resulting from a want of nutriment, there is a class of plants which blossom *before* they put forth leaves. Goethe's explanation, hypothetical though it be, is better. He says that as long as there are any of the grosser fluids to be rejected, the organs of the plant are forced to employ themselves in this labour, which labour renders flowering impossible; but no sooner do we limit the nourishment than, by diminishing this process of elaboration, we accelerate the flowering.

We are here touching on the great law of antagonism between Growth and Development which is so intimately connected with the law of Reproduction—a subject too vast to be even indicated in this rapid survey. The student will note, however, that although Goethe perils his position by the introduction of an hypothetical elaboration of fluids, without assigning a cause for that elaboration, he nevertheless sees, what many fail to see, that Reproduction is only another form

of Growth—a process of differentiation. "The vital forces of the plant," he says, "manifest themselves in two ways: on the one hand *vegetation*, issuing in the stem and leaves; on the other *reproduction*, issuing in flowers and fruits. If we examine vegetation closely, we shall see that the plant continuing itself from articulation to articulation, from leaf to leaf, and putting forth buds, accomplishes a *reproduction* which differs from that ordinarily so-named in being *successive*—it manifests itself in a series of isolated developments instead of manifesting itself *simultaneously*. That force which produces buds has the greatest analogy with that which determines simultaneously the higher act of propagation. We can force the plant to produce buds incessantly, or we can accelerate the epoch of flowering; the first by abundant nourishment, the second by nourishment less abundant. In defining *budding* as 'successive propagation', and *flowering* and *fructification* as 'simultaneous propagation', we designate the mode in which each manifests itself. Thus, then, whether the plant buds, flowers, or fructifies, it is always by means of *the same organs*, the form and destination of which are changed. The same organ which expands into a leaf upon the stem and presents such varied forms, contracts to make the calyx, expands again to make the petal, to contract once more into the sexual organs, and expand for the last time into fruit."

From these indications it will be perceived that the *Metamorphoses*—however left behind by the rapid advance of science—is still worth the attentive meditation of the student. With regard to the morphological theory, as a theory, I only know one good objection to be raised against it. The objection is this: if the leaf be considered as a mass of cells which have definite vegetative functions (according to the cell theory) it cannot be said, for example, that a stamen is a metamorphosis

of *this* leaf, for the stamen has other functions as well as another form. Those malformations of the stamen which exhibit *petals* instead of stamens, no more prove the metamorphosis, than the ossification of blood-vessels proves that the tissue of these vessels is softened bone. Only that can strictly be called a metamorphosis when the parts really spring *out of* developed leaves and not simply *in place of* them.

Upon the ordinary notions of metamorphosis I do not see how this objection is to be answered. It is an objection similar to that which has been brought against the theory of metamorphosis of tissues, and has not been answered by the holders of the cell-theory. But it seems to me that those modern French physiologists are justified who replace the notion of metamorphosis by that of *substitution*, throughout the organic world. Cartilage is not metamorphosed into bone, but is *replaced* by it. The gills are not metamorphosed into lungs, but are replaced by lungs. And applying this notion of *substitution* to the metamorphoses of plants, we shall be able to justify Goethe by perhaps the most striking example of metamorphosis which can be named, the example of the tadpole metamorphosed into the frog. For observe; if it is true that the stamen differs from the leaf in its functions and its form, so also does the frog differ in its physiological properties from the tadpole. The stamen in the early phases of its development resembles the leaf in the early phases of its development; but as the phases succeed, a change takes place owing to the changed conditions, the embryo leaf becomes a stamen, as the tadpole becomes a frog. Here the point of analogy acquires intensity; for just as by altering the conditions we can arrest the development of a stamen, and make it develope into a leaf, so also can we, by altering the conditions, arrest the development of a frog, and make it a gigantic tadpole. It seems then

evident that if we are allowed to use the word metamorphosis at all, we may apply it to plants as to animals.

To us, however, here occupied mainly with the questions in as far as they illustrate Goethe's achievements in science, it matters very little what conclusion be arrived at with respect to his theory. Enough that the theory has been fruitful in suggestion. Enough that he has brought a new science into the field of human activity. Enough that Morphology now counts among its students illustrious names, and crowds of followers. And this science we owe to the author of *Faust.*

We owe more to him. We owe to him some of the most luminous and comprehensive ideas on the science of life which are now guiding philosophic speculation. Such statements will not be accepted on my authority; but they can be substantiated by authority no one dare impugn. I have already cited Owen, St. Hilaire, and the continuer of Cuvier. In the historical sketch which Carus prefixes to his *Transcendental Anatomy*, he assigns to Goethe the merit of having created the true Method. After setting forth the various tentatives men had made to discover by means of *descriptive* anatomy, and occasional comparisons, the true relations of the various parts of the body, he says:* "If we go back as far as possible into the history of the labours undertaken with a view to arrive at the philosophic conception of the skeleton, we find that the first idea of a metamorphosis of the osseous forms; *i. e.*, that all forms are but modifications more or less traceable of one and the same Type;—this idea belongs to Goethe." After a quotation of Goethe's words, Carus adds: "It is difficult to express in clearer terms the idea of the Unity which rules over the plurality of the skeleton-forms. Its first great application was

* *Anatomie Comparée*, vol. III, p. 3. French trans.

the vertebral theory of the skull." To this let the testimony of Professor Oscar Schmidt be added: "Comparative anatomy, when Goethe began, was in its embryotic and chaotic commencements. It knew only details, and had no conception of a whole."* Isidore Geoffroy St. Hilaire, speaking of his father's labours and their coincidence in direction with those of Goethe, says: "L'un en Allemagne, l'autre en France, n'ont cessé de marcher parallèlement et souvent de front, vers une semblable rénovation de l'anatomie comparée." It is of itself no slight honour for any anatomist to be placed beside Geoffroy St. Hilaire, one of the most illustrious thinkers, and one of the most brilliant anatomists.† And it is an honour Goethe deserves; for, had his writings been signed by a name of any authority in science, they would long ago have formed texts for every writer. But he was a poet—and none but the eminent could perceive his eminence. Nor did *they* always perceive it. De Blainville, for example, in his *Histoire des Sciences de l'Organization* (III, pp. 484-494), says: "Goethe a plûtot été poète et artiste que naturaliste, bien qu'il ait réclamé, avec une vanité puérile, ce titre pendant une grande partie de sa vie." I would fain hope that this is not chargeable to De Blainville, but to his collaborateur, the Abbé Maupied; and the supposition is the more probable from the fact that Goethe is profoundly misrepresented in this exposition of his doctrine,

* Goethe's *Verhältniss zu den organischen Naturwissenschaften*, p. 13.

† Like all men, Geoffroy made several mistakes, and was sometimes hasty in leaping to conclusions. These errors are often alluded to with a scorn which is as ungenerous as it is unwise. The work he accomplished is a monument which will for ever preserve his name. Some of his writings are now very scarce; but if the reader has any curiosity on the subject, and will be content with a general survey of *Geoffroy's Life and Works*, he will find one, by the present writer, in the *Westminster Review*, Jan. 1854. I may take this opportunity of saying, that from my article in the same Review, on *Goethe as a Man of Science*, several details have been transplanted into this chapter.

and is said to have elaborated his theory of metamorphosis *à priori*, disregarding experience!

There will certainly be many of my readers who, having never given any consideration to the subject of philosophic anatomy, will fail to appreciate the immense importance of that science, and the value therefore of Goethe's efforts to create it. But the simple fact that philosophic anatomy is one of the great pillars of the Science of Life will suffice perhaps to sharpen the reader's attention; especially if he has been interested in works like the *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*. Nor need he be warned off this subject by any repulsion from anatomical details. It is not with details, but with general ideas, that philosophic anatomy mainly concerns itself; the details are but illustrations. In proportion to his knowledge, will Goethe's essays appear to him luminous and suggestive; but he may read them with benefit, even if his knowledge be null.

Let me repeat, as a matter of justice, and not to allow the high praise bestowed on Goethe's efforts to mislead the reader's expectation, that the merit of these essays is the merit of a *thinker in science*, not the merit of an industrious discoverer and collector of details. It is the philosophy of the subject we must seek there, not materials. The great effort was to create a Method, to establish principles upon which the science could be founded. In an admirable little essay on "Experiment as the mediator between the Object and the Subject", written in 1793, we see how clear were his ideas on Method. "Man," he says, "regards at first all external objects with reference to himself; and rightly so, for his whole fate depends on them, on the pleasure or pain which they cause him, on their utility or danger to him." This is the initial stage of all speculation. Its Method is the determination of external things according

to *analogies drawn from within.* The culmination of this Method is seen in the fundamental axiom of Des Cartes and Spinoza: *all clear ideas are true.* So long as this Method is followed Metaphysics reigns triumphant, and Positive Science is impossible. It is displaced by the Positive Method. Goethe remarks how much more difficult is the task of discerning objects according to the Positive Method, *i.e.* not as related to *us,* but as related to one another. Our touchstone of pleasure or pain is given up. With godlike indifference we become *spectators,* and seek that which *is,* not that which touches *us.* Thus the real Botanist considers less the beauty, or the use of flowers, than their laws of growth, and their relation to each other. And as the sun shines on them, developing them all impartially, so must the philosopher look on them with calm contemplative eye, taking the terms of his comparison from the circle he contemplates, not from any figments of his own mind. Goethe sets aside all inquiry into final causes,—by Bacon justly styled "barren virgins",—and seeks to know what *is.*

It is worthy of remark that the study of Development is quite a modern study. Formerly men were content with the full-statured animal,—the perfected art—the completed society. The phases of development and the laws of growth were disregarded, or touched on in a vague uncertain manner. A change has come over the spirit of inquiry. "The history of Development," says the father of modern embryology, K. E. von Baer, "is the true Torchbearer in every inquiry into organic bodies." In Geology, in Physiology, in History, and in Art, we are now all bent on tracing the phases of development. To understand the *grown* we try to follow the *growth.*

When Goethe speculated, this study of Development was in its infancy. It is his merit that at once he placed himself at this point of view, and stood with Meckel and

Geoffroy St. Hilaire in advance of his age. Not only did he grasp the principle, he applied it. Thus we read with astonishment the clearest announcement of certain general laws of organization, which have since been among the glories of Geoffroy St. Hilaire, Von Baer, Milne-Edwards, Cuvier and Lamarck! Read this passage:

"Every living being is not an unity but a plurality. Even when it appears as an individual, it is the reunion of beings living and existing in themselves, identical in origin, but which may appear identical or similar, different or dissimilar.

"The *more imperfect* a being is the more do its individual parts *resemble each other*, and the more do these parts *resemble the whole*. The *more perfect* the being is the more *dissimilar are its parts*. In the former case the parts are more or less a repetition of the whole; in the latter case they are totally unlike the whole.

"The more the parts resemble each other, the less subordination is there of one to the other. *Subordination of parts indicates high grade of organization.*"

To illustrate by familiar examples the law thus announced: Take a polyp and cut it into several pieces; each piece will live and manifest all those phenomena of nutrition and sensibility which the whole polyp manifested. Turn it inside out like a glove, the internal part becomes its skin, the external part becomes its stomach. The reason is, that in the simple structure of the polyp, the parts resemble each other and resemble the whole. There is no individualized organ, or apparatus of organs, performing one function, such as nutrition, and nothing else. Every function is performed by every part; just as in savage societies, every man is his own tailor, his own armourer, his own cook, and his own policeman. But take an animal higher in the scale, and there you find the structure composed of dis-

similar parts, and each part having a different office. That animal cannot be hewn in pieces and each piece continue to live as before. That animal cannot have its skin suddenly turned into a stomach. That animal, in the social body, cannot make his own clothes or his own musket; the division of labour which has accompanied his higher condition has robbed him of his universal dexterity.

The law announced by Goethe, and I believe distinctly announced by him for the first time, is now to be met with in every philosophic work on zoology. One form of it is known in England as Von Baer's law, viz., that Development proceeds from the Like to the Unlike, from the General to the Particular, from the Homogeneous to the Heterogeneous; and has by Owen, Carpenter, and Huxley, been often lauded and applied. I have too profound an admiration for Von Baer to wish in any way to diminish his splendid claims, but I cannot help remarking that when Dr. Carpenter attributes to him the merit of having discovered this law, he is in direct contradiction with Von Baer himself, who not only makes no such claim, but in giving the formula adds, "this law of development has indeed never been overlooked."* His merit is the splendid application and demonstration of the law, not the first perception of it.

It is generally known that the law of "division of labour in the animal organism" is claimed by Milne-Edwards, the great French zoologist, as a discovery of his own. Yet we see how clearly it is expressed in Goethe's formula. And with even more clearness do we see expressed Cuvier's principle of classification, viz., the *subordination of parts.* I do not wish to press this point further, nor do I wish that these great men should be robbed of any merit in order to glorify Goethe with

* "Dieses Gesetz der Ausbildung ist wohl nie verkannt worden." *Zur Entwickelungsgeschichte.* Erster Theil, p. 153.

their trophies. The student of history knows how discoveries are, properly speaking, made by the Age, and not by men. He knows that all discoveries have had their anticipations; and that the world justly credits the man who makes the discovery *available*, not the man who simply perceived that it was possible.* I am not here writing the history of science, but the biography of Goethe; and the purpose of these citations is to show that he placed himself at the highest point of view possible to his age, and that as a thinker he thought the thoughts which the greatest men have subsequently made popular.

Observe, moreover, that Goethe's anticipation is not of that slight and fallacious order which, like so many other anticipations, rests upon a vague or incidental phrase. He did not simply attain an aperçu of the truth. He mastered the law, and his mastery of that law sprang from his mastery of the whole series of conceptions in which it finds its place. Thus in his "Introduction to Comparative Anatomy", written in 1795, his object was to create a Method. He pointed out the essentially sterile nature of the comparisons then made, not only in respect of comparing animals with men and with each other, not only in the abuse of final causes, but also in taking Man as the standard, instead of commencing with the simplest organisms and rising gradually upwards. One year after this, Geoffroy St. Hilaire, ignorant of what was passing in the study at Weimar, and in the Museum at Jena, published his *Dissertation sur les Makis*, wherein he began his renovation of

* "He becomes the true discoverer who establishes the truth: and the sign of the proof is the general acceptance. Whoever, therefore, resumes the investigation of a neglected or repudiated doctrine, elicits its true demonstrations, and discovers and explains the nature of the errors that have led to its tacit or declared rejection, may calmly and confidently await the acknowledgments of his rights in the discovery." Owen: *Homologies*, p. 76.

the science. He, too, like Goethe, was bent on the creation of a Type according to which all organized structures could be explained. This conception of a Type *(allgemeines Bild)*, according to which the whole animal kingdom may be said to be constructed, was a truly scientific conception, and has borne noble fruit. It must not, however, be confounded with a Platonic Idea. It was no metaphysical entity, it was simply a scientific artifice. Goethe expressly says that we are not for an instant to believe in the *existence* of this Type as an objective reality, although it is the generalized expression of that which really exists. This caution has not been sufficiently present to the minds of several speculators; and, especially in German hands, the idea of a Type has engendered not a few extravagances. Nevertheless, the net result of these speculations has been good. If Oken sometimes excites a smile, Geoffroy and Owen redeem philosophic anatomy from derision, and place it on a pedestal commanding universal respect.

The mention of Owen leads me to a remark which may not be without assistance to the student of philosophic anatomy, by clearing away some of the confusion which obscures this question of typical structure. It is commonly said, "the skull is a congeries of modified vertebræ". Oken and Goethe both seem to consider the skull as a vertebral column. But this is true only when we mean by a vertebra the *typical vertebra*, and distinguish cranial vertebræ from cervical vertebræ, from dorsal vertebræ, and from lumbar vertebræ. In other words, every special vertebra is the *individual* form of a *general* type. The skull is not, as Oken maintains, a modified spinal column.* To maintain this is to say, that the spinal vertebra is the typical form from which the cranial vertebræ are de-

* "As the brain is a more voluminously developed spinal cord, so is the brain-case a more voluminous spinal column." Oken; cited by Owen. *Homologies*, p. 74.

veloped, whereas, in truth, both are but variations of one typical form; and the idea of Kielmeyer that the spinal column is a skull, is quite as accurate as the idea of Oken that the skull is a spinal column. Indeed, Kielmeyer's idea is the more admissible of the two; for if we seek our evidence in embryology, or in that "permanent embryology" the Animal Series, we find the cranial vertebræ are *first* in order of time: in fishes the skull alone presents true osseous development of all the segments of the typical bone; and if we go still lower in the series, we find—in the Cephalopoda—a rudimentary brain, not unlike the lower forms of the brain in fishes, enclosed in a rudimentary skull, but without a spinal cord or spinal column. We are justified, therefore, in saying that the skull cannot be a modification of the spinal column.

Oken and Spix regard the head as a "repetition" of the trunk; the brain is a repetition of the spinal chord; the mouth repeats the intestine and abdomen; the nose repeats the lungs and thorax; the jaws the limbs. Unfortunately for this ingenious scheme, there are vertebrate animals with heads but without limbs; and it would therefore be nearer the mark to call the limbs modified jaws, than to call jaws modified limbs. In presence of such perplexities, we cannot wonder if some men have objected to the vertebral theory, that it amounts to nothing more than saying a vertebra is a bone.

The great merit of Owen's masterly work is, that in it he has not only placed the whole of the question of vertebral structure on an indisputable basis of detailed demonstration, but has also rescued it from its early perplexities by the definition of the vertebra and the construction of an ideal type. Instead of suffering us to say a vertebra is a bone, he forces us to acknowledge that a vertebra "is one of those segments of the endo-skeleton which constitute the axis of the

body, and the protecting canals of the nervous and vascular trunks".* Under this definition all vertebræ may be classed; and from the Type he has constructed it is possible to derive every special vertebra as a special modification.

Tempting as Goethe's essays on Comparative Anatomy are, I dare not here linger over them. The many ideas which they contain deserving of especial notice, would occupy far more space than can be awarded in this biography, and I must be content with referring the curious reader to the essays themselves, noting by the way that the important principle introduced by Lamarck into philosophic zoology, namely, the influence of surrounding media in determining the varieties of organized forms—a principle he greatly exaggerated beyond its real bearing—Goethe has also enunciated, and with even greater exaggeration.†

I have only room for a consideration of Goethe's claim to the discovery of the vertebral theory of the skull—a claim which has been hotly disputed, and which has by Oken been called an act of mendacious vanity. It comes, therefore, within the strictly biographical matter of the present work.

Fifteen years after Goethe had passed away from this world, and when therefore there was no power of reply, Oken in the *Isis* (1847, *Heft* VII) made his charge. This statement has influenced Prof. Owen in his exposition of the discovery,‡ and I confess that it completely staggered me, suggesting very painful feelings as to Goethe's conduct. Indeed, the similarity in the stories of both suggests suspicion. Goethe, during one of his rambles in the Jewish cemetery near Venice, picked up the skull of a ram, which had been cut longitudinally, and on

* *Homologies*, p. 81.

† Lamarck's *Philosophie Zoologique* appeared in 1809. Goethe wrote in 1795.

‡ *Homologies of the Skeleton.*

examining it, the idea occurred to him that the face was composed of three vertebræ: "the transition from the anterior sphenoid to the ethnoid was evident at once". Now, compare Oken's story. He was rambling in the Harz mountains, and there picked up the skull of a deer: "on examining it," says Carus, "he exclaimed, 'That is a vertebral column!'" Goethe declares he made the discovery in 1790. Oken declares he made his in 1806, and that in 1807 he wrote his Academic Programme. He was then a *Privat-Docent* in Göttingen, "at a time, therefore, when Goethe certainly knew nothing of my existence". Pray note this avowal that Goethe knew nothing of him. He sent his dissertation to Jena, where he had just been appointed professor. Of that university Goethe was curator. This Oken considers decisive. He thinks Goethe would assuredly have remonstrated against his claim to the discovery had he not recognized its justice. This fact, however, is by no means so decisive. We shall see presently that Goethe had his own reasons for silence. "I naturally sent Goethe a copy of my programme. This discovery pleased him so much that he invited me, at Easter 1808, to spend a week with him at Weimar, which I did. As long as the discovery was ridiculed by men of science Goethe was silent, but no sooner did it attain renown through the works of Meckel, Spix, and others, than there grew up a murmur among Goethe's servile admirers that this idea originated with him. About this time Bojanus went to Weimar, and hearing of Goethe's discovery, half believed it, and sent the rumour to me, which I thoughtlessly printed in the *Isis* (1818, p. 509); whereupon I announced that I made my discovery in the autumn of 1806." This is equivocal. He did *not* throw any doubt on Goethe's claim to priority, he only asserted his own originality. "Now that Bojanus had brought the subject forward," he adds,

"Goethe's vanity was piqued, and he came afterwards, thirteen years subsequent to my discovery, and said he had held the opinion for thirty years."

Such is Oken's statement. After a very long and minute investigation, I come to the conclusion that the charge made by Oken is utterly untenable against the facts; and I also come to the conclusion that he has mistaken the whole case at issue. It can be shown that Goethe was justified in claiming priority of the idea, and that Oken was justified in claiming priority of the discovery. Goethe had an aperçu which he did not develope. Oken had an aperçu which he demonstrated in detail. In Goethe's mind it was one of the many applications of a fundamental conception of organic evolution—a conception which led to his discovery of the intermaxillary. In Oken it was a special problem which a young anatomist set himself to solve. If Goethe is entitled to claim the discovery of the intermaxillary bone in man, the existence of which had been proclaimed by all the Galenists, but the demonstration of which is due to him alone, then, upon the same principles, is Oken entitled to the discovery of the vertebral structure of the skull, although Goethe had originated the idea.*

Having thus placed the question on its true ground, and given to Oken all the merit he claims as a discoverer, I must now rescue Goethe from the moral accusation Oken so intemperately and, as I think, so equivocally, brings forward. Two questions present themselves: Why was Goethe silent when

* Unless this mode of considering the point be adopted, we must deny to both Goethe and Oken the claim of originality, and transfer it five centuries earlier, to Albertus Magnus, who in his treatise *De Animalibus* not only indicates an aperçu of the idea, and actually employs the expression "limbs of the head", which is the same as that used by the modern transcendental anatomists, but commences his description of the osseous system with the vertebral column. I speak only from second-hand knowledge of Albertus. Pouchet: *Hist. des Sciences Naturelles au Moyen Age*, p. 271.

Oken first announced his discovery? and Why did not Oken make the charge of plagiarism during Goethe's lifetime? The first question may be answered from Goethe's own works. In a note entitled *Das Schädelgerüst aus sechs Wirbelknochen auferbaut*, after alluding to his recognition first of three and subsequently of six vertebræ in the skull, which he spoke of among his friends, who set to work to demonstrate it if possible, he says: "In the year 1807 this theory appeared tumultuously and imperfectly before the public, and naturally awakened great disputes and some applause. How seriously it was damaged by the incomplete and fantastic method of exposition History must relate." This criticism of the exposition will be understood by everyone who has read Oken, and who knows Goethe's antipathy to metaphysics.* In his *Tag und Jahres Hefte* he mentions that while he was working out this theory with his two friends, Riemer and Voigt, they brought him, with some surprise, the news that this idea had just been laid before the public in an academic programme, "a fact," he adds, "*which they, being still alive, can testify*". Why did not Goethe claim priority? "I told my friends to keep quiet, for the idea was not properly worked out in the programme; and that it was not elaborated from original observations would be plain to all scientific men. I was frequently besought to speak plainly on the subject; but I was firm in my silence."

I confess this evidence carries complete conviction to my mind. It was published many years before Oken made his charge, and it accused him in the most explicit terms of having prematurely disclosed an idea Goethe was then elaborating with the assistance of his friends. Nor was this all. It appealed to two honourable and respected men, then living,

* So also Cuvier's antipathy to this exposition made him blind to the profound truth which lived behind it.

as witnesses of the truth. Oken said nothing when the question could have been peremptorily settled by calling upon Voigt and Riemer. He waited till death rendered an appeal impossible. He says, indeed, that he made no answer to the first passage I have cited, because he was not *named* in it, and he "did not wish to involve himself in a host of disagreeables". But this is no answer to the *second* passage. There he is named as plainly as if the name of Oken were printed in full; and not only is he named, but Goethe's friends speak of Oken's coming forward with Goethe's idea as a matter which "surprised" them.

Having answered the question: Why Goethe was silent? I leave to those interested in Oken's character to answer the question: Why was Oken silent during the lifetime of the man whom he accused?*

To conclude this somewhat lengthy chapter on the Scientific Studies, it must be stated that, for the sake of bringing together his various efforts into a manageable whole, I have not attended strictly to Chronology. Nor have I specified the various separate essays he has written. They are all to be found collected in his works. My main object has been to show what were the directions of his mind; what were his achievements and failures in Science; what place Science filled in his life, and how false the supposition is that he was a mere dabbler, playing with science as an artist. What Buffon says of Pliny may truly be said of Goethe, that he had *cette facilité de penser en grand qui multiplie la science;* and it is only as a thinker in these great departments that I claim a high place for him.

* A friend of Oken's suggests the answer:—It was because the Hegelians began to accuse Oken of having stolen the idea from Goethe, that in irritation at this charge he wrote the article in the *Isis* to which I have referred.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CAMPAIGN IN FRANCE.

WE now return to the narrative, some points of which have been anticipated in the preceding chapter. In 1790 Goethe undertook the government of all the Institutions for Science and Art, and busied himself with the arrangement of the Museums and Botanical Gardens at Jena. In March of the same year he went once more to Italy to meet the Duchess Amalia and Herder in Venice. There he tried in science to find refuge from troubled thoughts. Italy on a second visit seemed, however, quite another place to him. "He had a vision of his own, ah! why should he undo it?" Such impressions are not twice inspired. He began to suspect there had been considerable illusion in the charm of his first visit. The *Venetian Epigrams*, if compared with the *Roman Elegies*, will indicate the difference of his mood. The yearning regret, the fulness of delight, the newness of wonder which give their accents to the Elegies, are replaced by sarcasms and the bitterness of disappointment. It is true that many of these epigrams were written subsequently, as their contents prove, but the mass of them are products of the Venetian visit. Something of this dissatisfaction must be attributed to his position. He

was ill at ease with the world. The troubles of the time, and the troubles of his own domestic affairs, aggravated the dangers which then threatened his aims of self-culture, and increased his difficulty in finding that path in science and art whereon the culture of the world might be pursued.

In June he returned to Weimar. In July the Duke sent for him at the Prussian Camp in Silesia, "where, instead of stones and flowers, he would see the field sown with troops." He went unwillingly, but compensated himself by active researches into "stones and flowers," leaving to the Duke and others such interest as was to be found in soldiers. He lived like a hermit in the camp, and began to write an essay on the development of animals, and a comic opera!

In August they returned. The Duchess Amalia and Herder, impatient at "such waste of time over old bones," plagued him into relinquishing osteology, and urged him to complete *Wilhelm Meister*. He did not, however, proceed far with it. The time was past; and to disprove Newton was a more imperious impulse. In 1791, which was a year of quiet study and domestic happiness for him, the Court Theatre was established. He undertook the direction with delight. In a future chapter we shall follow his efforts to create a national stage; and by bringing them before the eye in one continuous series, save the tedious repetition of isolated details. In July the Duchess Amalia founded her "Friday Evenings." In her palace, between the hours of five and eight, the Duke, the Duchess Luise, Goethe and his circle, with a few favoured friends from the court, assembled to hear some one of the members read a composition of his own. No sort of etiquette was maintained. Each member, on entering, sat down where he pleased. Only for the Reader was a distinct place allotted. One night Goethe read them the genealogy of Cagliostro, which

he had brought from Italy; another night he gave them a lecture on Colours; Herder read on Immortality; Bertuch on Chinese Colours and English Gardens; Böttiger on the Vases of the Ancients; Hufeland on his favourite theme of Longevity; and Bode read fragments of his translation of Montaigne. When the reading was over, they all approached a large table in the middle of the room, on which lay some engravings or some novelty of interest, and friendly discussion began. The absence of etiquette made these reunions delightful.

The mention of Cagliostro in the preceding paragraph recalls Goethe's comedy *Der Gross Kophta*, in which he dramatized the story of the Diamond Necklace. It had originally been schemed as an opera; Reichardt was to have composed the music; and if the reader happens to have waded through this dull comedy, he will regret that it was not made an opera, or anything else except what it is. One is really distressed to find such productions among the writings of so great a genius, and exasperated to find critics lavish in their praise of a work which their supersubtle ingenuity cannot rescue from universal neglect. I will not occupy space with an analysis of it.

And now he was to be torn from his quiet studies to follow the fortunes of an unquiet camp. The King of Prussia and the Duke of Brunswick at the head of a large army invaded France, to restore Louis XVI to his throne, and save Legitimacy from the sacrilegious hands of Sanscullotism. France, it was said, groaned under the tyranny of factions, and yearned for deliverance. The emigrants made it clear as day that the allies would be welcomed by the whole nation; and the German rulers willingly lent their arms to the support of Legitimacy. Karl August, passionately fond of the army, received the command of a Prussian regiment. And Goethe, passionately fond of Karl August, followed him into the field.

But he followed the Duke—he had no sympathy with the cause. Indeed, he had no strong feeling either way. Legitimacy was no passion with him; still less was Republicanism. Utterly without interest in political matters, profoundly convinced that all salvation could only come through inward culture, and dreading disturbances mainly because they rendered culture impossible, he was emphatically the "Child of Peace", and could at no period of his life be brought to sympathize with great struggles. He disliked the Revolution as he disliked the Reformation, because they both thwarted the peaceful progress of development:

> Franzthum drängt in diesen verworrenen Tagen wie ehmals Lutherthum es gethan, ruhige Bildung zurück.

That philosophers and patriots should thunder against such a doctrine, refute its arguments, and proclaim its dangers, is reasonable enough; but how strangely unreasonable in philosophers and patriots to thunder against Goethe, because he, holding this doctrine, wrote and acted in its spirit! We do not need this example to teach us how men transfer their hatred of opinions to the holders of the hated opinions, otherwise we might wonder at the insensate howl which has been raised against the greatest glory of the German name, because he did not share the opinions of the howlers; opinions, too, which they for the most part would not have held, had they not been instructed by the events which have since given approbation to what *then* seemed madness.

It was not in Goethe's nature to be much moved by events, to be deeply interested in the passing troubles of external life. A meditative mind like his naturally sought in the eternal principles of Nature that stimulus and that food which other minds sought in the passing phenomena of the day. A

poet and a philosopher is bound to be interested in the great questions of poetry and philosophy; but to rail at him for not also taking part in politics, is as irrational as to rail at the prime minister because he cares not two pins for Greek Art, and has no views on the transmutation of species.* It is said, and very foolishly said, that Goethe turned from politics to art and science, because politics disturbed him, and because he was too *selfish* to interest himself in the affairs of others. But this accusation is on a par with those ungenerous accusations which declare heterodoxy to be the shield of profligacy: as if doubts proceeded only from dissolute habits. How unselfish Goethe was, those best know who knew him best; it would be well if we could say so much of many who devote themselves to patriotic schemes. Patriotism is quite as selfish as Science or Art, even when it is a religious idea; nor is it likely to be less selfish when, as so often happens, patriotism is only an uneasy pauperism.

That Goethe sincerely desired the good of mankind, and that he laboured for it in his way with a perseverance few have equalled, is surely enough to absolve him from the charge of selfishness, because his labours did not run into politics? What his opinions were is one thing, another thing his conduct. Jean Paul says, "he was more far-sighted than the rest of the world, for in the beginning of the French Revolution he despised the patriots as much as he did at the end." I do not detect any feeling so deep as contempt, either late or early; but it is certain that while Klopstock and others were madly

* "Niun ingegno," says the noble and unfortunate Leopardi, "è creato dalla natura agli studi; nè l'uomo nasce a scrivere, ma solo a fare. Perciò veggiamo che i più degli scrittori eccellenti, e massime de' poeti illustri, di questa medesima età, furono da principio inclinati straordinariamente alle grandi azioni: *alle quale repugnando i tempi, e forse anche impediti dalla fortuna propria, si volsero a scrivere cose grande.*" IL PARINI, OVVERO DELLA GLORIA.

enthusiastic at the opening of this terrible drama, they were as madly fanatical against it before its close; whereas Goethe seems to have held pretty much the same opinion throughout. It has been finely said: "Toute période historique a deux faces: l'une assez pauvre, assez ridicule, ou assez malheureuse, qui est tournée vers le calendrier du temps; l'autre grande, efficace, et sérieuse, qui regarde celui de l'éternité." Of no epoch is this more strikingly true than of the French Revolution. In it Goethe only saw the temporal aspect; his want of historical philosophy prevented him from seeing the eternal aspect.

There were three principles promulgated by the Republicans, which to him were profound absurdities. The first was the doctrine of equality; not simply of equality in the eye of the law (that he accepted), but of absolute equality. His study of Nature, no less than his study of men, led him, as it could not but lead him, to the conviction that each Individual is perfect in itself, and in so far equals the highest, but that no one Individual is exactly like another.

Gleich sei keiner dem Andern; doch gleich sei Jeder dem Höchsten.
Wie das zu machen? es sei Jeder vollendet in sich.

The second revolutionary principle was the doctrine of government by the people. He believed in no such governmental power. Even when you kill the King, he says, you do not know how to rule in his place.

Sie gönnten Cäsar'n das Reich nicht,
Und wussten's nicht zu regieren.

He pointed to the fate of France "as a lesson both to governors and the governed, but more even for the latter than the former. The rulers were destroyed, but who was there to protect the Many *against* the Many? The Mob became the Tyrant."

Frankreichs traurig Geschick, die Grossen mögen's bedenken;
Aber bedenken fürwahr sollen es Kleine noch mehr.
Grosse gingen zu Grunde: doch wer beschützte die Menge
Gegen die Menge? Da war Menge der Menge Tyrann.

What wonder then if he felt repulsion to all the "Apostles of Freedom", when on close scrutiny he found they all sought nothing but licence?

Alle Freiheits-Apostel, sie waren mir immer zuwider
Willkür suchte doch nur Jeder am ende für sich.

The third revolutionary principle was, that political freedom was necessary to man. In the early days of authorship he had already spoken his conviction that such freedom was by no means necessary. In *Egmont* it reappears; and through life we find him insisting on the fact that no man *can* be free; the only freedom necessary is that which enables each to go about his business in security, to rear house and children, to move unconstrained in his small circle. It does not seem to occur to him that even this freedom is impossible without political freedom. It does not occur to him that police-regulations affect the individual, and governmental regulations affect the nation.

But while he was thus fundamentally opposed to the principles of the Revolution and the government of the Many, it is equally clear that he had no sympathy with the Royalists; that he neither absolved their policy nor their acts. The madness of the Terrorists was to him no excuse for the duplicity of the Royalists. "No, you are not right. No, you must not deceive the Mob, because the Mob is wild and foolish. Wild and foolish are all Mobs which have been duped. Be only *upright* with them, and you will gradually train them to be men."

Sage, thun wir nicht recht? Wir müssen den Pöbel betrügen.
Sieh' nur, wie ungeschickt, sieh' nur, wie wild er sich zeigt!—
Ungeschickt und wild sind alle rohen Betrognen;
Seid nur *redlich*, und so führt ihn zum Menschlichen an.

Nor was all the wild oratory so irrational in his eyes as the royalists proclaimed it. "These street orators seem to me also mad; but a madman will speak wisdom in freedom, when in slavery wisdom is dumb."

> Mir auch scheinen sie toll; doch redet ein Toller
> Weise Sprüche, wenn, ach! Weisheit im Sclaven verstummt.

To Eckermann he said: "A revolution is always the fault of the government, never of the people."

I might extend these remarks by showing how such political principles naturally grew up in the course of his education, and how he, in the forty-third year of his age, was not likely to become an apostle of Freedom, or to become deeply interested in political disturbances, especially at this period when he had completely emerged from the rebellious strivings of his youth, and had settled into the crystals of manhood. But enough has been said to show what his position truly was; and the reader who will not accept it with that impartiality which it claims, will certainly not accept it more readily, because he is told its origin and growth. The American who despises the Negro because he is black, will not despise him less on learning that the blackness is nothing but a peculiar modification of the pigment of the skin.

Goethe has himself written a diary of the "Campaign in France",* and if I had any belief in the reader's following the advice, I would advise him to read that work, and save some pages of this volume. In well-grounded suspicion that he will do nothing of the kind, I select a few details of interest, and string them on a thread of narrative.

The Allies entered France, believing the campaign would be a mere promenade. Longwy they were assured would soon

* It has been translated by Mr. Robert Farie (Chapman and Hall, 1849). The extracts which follow are from this translation.

surrender, and the people receive them with open arms. Longwy did surrender; but the people, so far from showing any disposition to welcome them, everywhere manifested the most determined resistance. The following passage will let us pretty clearly into the secret of Goethe's views. "Thus did the Prussians, Austrians, and a portion of the French, come to carry on their warlike operations on the French soil. By whose power and authority did they this? They might have done it in their own name. War had been partly declared against them—their league was no secret; but another pretext was invented. They took the field in the name of Louis XVI: they exacted nothing, but they borrowed compulsorily. *Bons* had been printed, which the commander signed; but whoever had them in his possession filled them up at his pleasure, according to circumstances, and Louis XVI was to pay. Perhaps, after the manifesto, nothing had so much exasperated the people against the monarchy as did this treatment. I was myself present at a scene which I remember as a most tragic one. Several shepherds, who had succeeded in uniting their flocks, in order to conceal them for safety in the forests or other retired places, being seized by some active patrols and brought to the army, were at first well received and kindly treated. They were asked who were the different proprietors: the flocks were separated and counted. Anxiety and fear, but still with some hope, fluctuated in the countenances of the worthy people. But when this mode of proceeding ended in the division of the flocks among the regiments and companies, whilst, on the other hand, the pieces of paper drawn on Louis XVI were handed over quite civilly to their proprietors, and their woolly favourites were slaughtered at their feet by the impatient and hungry soldiers, I confess that my eyes and my soul have seldom witnessed a more cruel spectacle, and more

profound manly suffering in all its gradations. The Greek tragedies alone have anything so purely, deeply pathetic."

Throughout these pages he is seen interesting himself in men, in science, in nature,—but not at all in the cause of the war. Soldiers fishing attract him to their side, and he is in ecstacies with the optical phenomena observed in the water. The bombardment of Verdun begins, and he enters a battery which is hard at work, but is driven out by the intolerable roar of the cannon; on his way out he meets the Prince Reuss. "We walked up and down behind some vineyard walls, protected by them from the cannon balls. After talking about sundry political matters by which we only got entangled in a labyrinth of hopes and cares, the Prince asked me what I was occupied with at present, and was much surprised when, instead of speaking of tragedies and novels, excited by the phenomenon of to-day, I began to speak with great animation of the doctrine of colours." He has been reproached for this "indifference," and that by men who would extol Archimedes for having prosecuted his studies during the siege of Syracuse. It was as natural for Goethe to have his mind occupied with a curious phenomenon amid the roar of cannon, as it was for the soldiers to sing libertine songs when marching to death. The camp too afforded him, with its opportunities for patience, some good opportunities for observing mankind. He notices the injurious influence of war upon the mind: "You are daring and destructive one day, and humane and creative the next; you accustom yourself to phrases adapted to excite and keep alive hope in the midst of most desperate circumstances; by this means a kind of hypocrisy is produced of an unusual character, and is distinguished from the priestly and courtly kind."

After detailing some of the miseries of the campaigning life, he says: "Happy is he whose bosom is filled with a higher

passion. The colour phenomenon observed at the spring never for a moment left me. I thought it over and over again, that I might be able to make experiments on it. I dictated to Vogel a loose sketch of my theory, and drew the figures afterwards. These papers I still possess with all the marks of the rainy weather, as witnesses of the faithful study in the dubious path I had entered." Very characteristic of his thirst for knowledge is this daring exposure of himself: "I had heard much of the cannon fever, and I wanted to know what kind of thing it was. Ennui and a spirit which every kind of danger excited to daring, nay even to rashness, induced me to ride up quite coolly to the outwork of La Lune. This was again occupied by our people; but it presented the wildest aspect. The roofs were shot to pieces, the cornshocks scattered about, the bodies of men mortally wounded stretched upon them here and there, and occasionally a spent cannon-ball fell and rattled among the ruins of the tile-roofs. Quite alone, and left to myself, I rode away on the heights to the left, and could plainly survey the favourable position of the French: they were standing in the form of a semicircle, in the greatest quiet and security; Kellermann, on the left wing, being the easiest to reach .... I had now arrived quite in the region where the balls were playing across me: the sound of them is curious enough, as if it were composed of the humming of tops, the gurgling of water, and the whistling of birds. They were less dangerous by reason of the wetness of the ground; wherever one fell, it stuck fast. And thus my foolish experimental ride was secured against the danger at least of the balls rebounding. In these circumstances, I was soon able to remark that something unusual was taking place within me: I paid close attention to it, and still the sensation can be described only by similitude. It appeared as if you were in some extremely hot

place, and at the same time quite penetrated by the heat of it, so that you feel yourself, as it were, quite one with the element in which you are. The eyes lose nothing of their strength or clearness; but it is as if the world had a kind of brown-red tint, which makes the situation, as well as the surrounding objects, more impressive. I was unable to perceive any agitation of the blood, but everything seemed rather to be swallowed up in the glow of which I speak. From this, then, it is clear in what sense this condition can be called a fever. It is remarkable, however, that the horrible uneasy feeling arising from it is produced in us solely through the ears. For the cannon thunder, the howling, whistling, crashing of the balls through the air, is the real cause of these sensations. After I had ridden back, and was in perfect security, I remarked with surprise that the glow was completely extinguished, and not the slightest feverish agitation was left behind. On the whole, this condition is one of the least desirable, as indeed, among my dear and noble comrades, I found scarcely one who expressed a really passionate desire to try it. Thus the day had passed away; the French stood immovable, Kellermann having taken also a more advantageous position. Our people were withdrawn out of the fire, and it was exactly as if nothing had taken place. The greatest consternation was diffused among the army. That very morning they had thought of nothing short of spitting the whole of the French and devouring them; nay, I myself had been tempted to take part in this dangerous expedition from the unbounded confidence I felt in such an army and in the Duke of Brunswick; but now every one went about alone, nobody looked at his neighbour, or if it did happen, it was to curse or to swear. Just as night was coming on, we had accidentally formed ourselves into a circle, in the middle of which the usual fire even could not be kindled: most of them

were silent, some spoke, and in fact the power of reflection and judgment was awanting to all. At last I was called upon to say what I thought of it; for I had been in the habit of enlivening and amusing the troop with short sayings. This time I said: From this place and from this day forth commences a new era in the world's history, and you can all say that you were present at its birth."

The night brought rain and wind. They had lain on the ground behind a hill which protected them from the cutting wind, when it was proposed that they should bury themselves in the earth, covered by their cloaks. Holes were dug, and even Karl August himself did not refuse this "premature burial". Goethe wrapped himself in a blanket and slept better than Ulysses. In vain a colonel remonstrated, and pointed out to them that the French had a battery on the opposite hill with which they could bury the sleepers in real earnest. Sleep and warmth for the present, were worth more than security against possible danger.

The defeat at Valmy, slight as it was, discouraged the Prussians, and exhilarated the French. The Prussians, startled at the cry of *vive la nation!* with which the republicans charged them, and finding themselves on a foreign territory without magazines, stores, or any preparations for a great conflict, perceived the mistake they had made, and began to retreat. It was doubtless a great relief to Goethe to hear that he had not much longer to endure the hardships of campaigning. He had no interest in the cause, and he had not gained, by closer contact with the leaders, a higher opinion of their characters. "Although I had already found among the diplomatic corps some genuine and valuable friends, I could not refrain, so often as I saw them in the midst of these great movements, from making some odd comparisons which forced

themselves irresistibly upon my mind: they appeared to me as so many playhouse directors, who choose the pieces, distribute the parts, and move about unseen; whilst the actors, doing their best and well prompted, have to commit the result of their exertions to fortune and the humour of the public."

He fell in with a collection of pamphlets, and among them were the instructions of the Notables. "The moderation of the people's demands at this time, the modesty with which they were put forward, formed a striking contrast to the violence, insolence, and desperation of the present state of things. I read these papers with genuine emotion, and took copies of some of them."

His return was slow. Meanwhile, the arms of the French seemed everywhere victorious. Verdun and Longwy were once more occupied by the republicans. On the Rhine, Treves and Mainz had capitulated to Custine. Goethe says:

"In the midst of this misery and confusion, a missing letter of my mother's found me, and reminded me, in a strange manner, of many peaceful passages of my youth, and circumstances connected with my family and native town. My uncle, the Alderman Textor, had died, whose near relationship had excluded me, during his lifetime, from the honourable and useful post of a Frankfurt councillor; and now, in accordance with an established and laudable custom, they thought immediately of me, I being pretty far advanced among the Frankfurt graduates. My mother had been commissioned to ask me whether I would accept the office of councillor if I were chosen one of those to be balloted for, and the golden ball should fall to me? Such a question could not, perhaps, have arrived at a more singular time than the present; I was taken by surprise, and thrown back upon myself; a thousand images started up before me, and prevented me from forming any connected

conclusion. But as a sick person or prisoner forgets for the moment his pains and troubles whilst listening to some tale which is related to him, so was I also carried back to other spheres and other times. I found myself in my grandfather's garden, where the espaliers, richly laden with nectarines were wont to tempt the grandson's longing appetite; and only the threat of banishment from this paradise, only the hope of receiving from the good old grandfather's own hand the red-cheeked fruit when ripe, could restrain this longing within reasonable bounds till the proper time at length arrived. Then I saw the venerable old man busied with his roses, and carefully protecting his hands from the thorns with the antiquarian gloves, delivered up as tribute by tax-freed cities; like the noble Laertes,—all but in his longings and his sorrows. Afterwards I saw him in his mayor's robes, with gold chain, sitting on the throne-seat under the Emperor's portrait; then, last of all, alas! in his dotage, for several years in his sick chair; and, finally, in his grave! On my last journey to Frankfurt I had found my uncle in possession of the house, court, and garden; as a worthy son of such a father, he attained, like him, the highest offices in the government of this free town. Here, in this intimate family circle, in this unchanged old well-known place, these boyhood recollections were vividly called forth, and brought with new emphasis before me. They were united also with other youthful feelings which I must not conceal. What citizen of a free city will deny that he has been ambitious of, sooner or later, rising to the dignity of councillor, alderman, or burgomaster; and has industriously and carefully striven, to the best of his ability, to attain to them, or perhaps other less important offices? For the pleasing thought of one day filling some post in the government is awakened early in the breast of every republican, and

is liveliest and proudest in the soul of a boy. I could not, however, abandon myself long to these pleasing dreams of my childhood. But, too soon aroused, I surveyed the ominous locality which surrounded me, the melancholy circumstances which hemmed me in, and, at the same time, the cloudy obscured prospect in the direction of my native town. I saw Mentz in the hands of the French; Frankfurt threatened, if not already taken; the way to it obstructed; and within those walls, streets, squares, dwellings, the friends of my youth, and my relations, already overtaken perhaps by the same misfortunes from which I had seen Longwy and Verdun so cruelly suffer: who would have dared to rush headlong into the midst of such a state of things? But even in the happiest days of that venerable corporation, it would have been impossible for me to agree to this proposal; the reasons for which are easily explained. For twelve years I had enjoyed singular good fortune,—the confidence as well as the indulgence of the Duke of Weimar. This highly-gifted and cultivated prince was pleased to approve of my inadequate services, and gave me facilities for developing myself, which would have been possible under no other conditions in my native country. My gratitude was boundless, as well as my attachment to his august consort and mother, to his young family, and to a country to which I had not been altogether unserviceable. And had I not to think also of newly-acquired, highly-cultivated friends, and of so many other domestic enjoyments and advantages which had sprung from my favourable and settled position?"

CHAPTER XII.

HOME ONCE AGAIN.

A PLEASANT surprise was in store for him on his return to Weimar, in the shape of the house in the *Frauenplan*, which the Duke had ordered to be rebuilt during his absence. This house, considered a palace in those days, was a very munificent gift. It was not so far advanced in the reconstruction, but that he could fashion it according to his taste; he arranged the splendid staircase: too large for the proportions of the house, but a pleasant reminiscence of Italy.

The passer-by sees through the windows the busts of the Olympian gods, which stand there as symbols of calmness and completeness. On entering the hall, the eye rests upon two noble casts in niches, or rests on the plan of Rome which decorates the wall, and on Meyer's *Aurora*, which colours the cieling. The group of Ildefonso stands near the door; and on the threshold, welcome speaks in the word "SALVE". On the first floor we enter the Juno room, so called from the colossal bust of Juno which consecrates it; on the walls are the *Loggie* of Raphael. To the left of this stands the Reception room; in it is the harpsichord which furnished many a musical evening: Hummel played on it, Catalani and Sontag

sang to it. Over the doors were Meyer's mythological cartoons; on the walls a copy of Aldobrandi's Wedding, with sketches of the great masters, and etchings. A large cabinet contained the engravings and gems; a side closet the bronze statuettes, lamps, and vases. On the other side, connected with the Juno room and opposite the Reception room, were three small rooms. The first contained sketches of Italian masters, and a picture by Angelica Kaufmann. The second and third contained various specimens of earthenware, and an apparatus to illustrate the *Farbenlehre*. A prolongation of the Juno room backwards was the Bust room, with the busts of Schiller, Herder, Jacobi, Voss, Sterne, Byron, etc. To this succeeded, a few steps lower, and opening on the trellised staircase leading to the garden, a small room in which he was fond of dining with a small party. The garden was tastefully laid out. The summer-houses contained his natural-history collections.

But the sanctuary of the house is the study, library, and bed-room. In the rooms just described the visitor sees the tokens of Goethe's position as minister and lover of Art. Compared with the Weimar standard of that day, these rooms were of palatial magnificence; but compared even with the Weimar standard, the rooms into which we now enter are of a more than bourgeois simplicity. Passing through an antechamber, where in cupboards stand his mineralogical collections, we enter the study, a low-roofed narrow room, somewhat dark, for it is lighted only through two tiny windows, and furnished with a simplicity quite touching to behold.* In the centre stands a plain oval table of unpolished oak. No armchair is to be seen, no sofa, nothing which speaks of ease. A plain hard chair has beside it the basket in which he used to

* I describe it as it now stands, just as it was on the day of his death.

place his handkerchief. Against the wall, on the right, is a long pear-tree table, with book-shelves, on which stand lexicons and manuals. Here hangs a pincushion, venerable in dust, with the visiting cards, and other trifles which death has made sacred. Here, also, a medallion of Napoleon, with this circumscription: "Scilicet immenso superest ex nomine multum." On the side wall, again, a book-case with some works of poets. On the wall to the left is a long desk of soft wood, at which he was wont to write. On it lie the original manuscripts of *Götz* and the *Elegies*, and a bust of Napoleon, in milk-white glass, which in the light shimmers with blue and flame colour; hence prized as an illustration of the *Farbenlehre*. A sheet of paper with notes of contemporary history is fastened near the door, and behind this door schematic tables of music and geology. The same door leads into a bedroom, if bedroom it can be called, which no maid-of-all-work in England would accept without a murmur. It is a closet with a window. A simple bed, an arm-chair by its side, and a tiny washing-table with a small white basin on it and a sponge, is all the furniture. To enter this room with any feeling for the greatness and goodness of him who slept here, and who here slept his last sleep, brings tears into the eyes and makes the breathing deep.

From the other side of the study we enter the library; which should rather be called a lumber-room of books. Rough deal shelves hold the books, with bits of paper on which are written "philosophy", "history", "poetry", etc., to mark the classification. It was very interesting to look over this collection, and the English reader will imagine the feelings with which I took down a volume of *Taylor's Historic Survey of German Poetry*, sent by Carlyle, and found, in the piece of paper which marked the place, a bit of Carlyle's own handwriting.

Such was Goethe's House, during the many years of his occupation. At the time of which we now write, it was of course somewhat different. The pleasure of reconstructing it, and the happiness of being once more at home with Christiane and his boy, able to pursue his studies in peace, were agreeable contrasts with his life in the camp. Meyer had returned from Italy, and came to live with him. Meyer's historical knowledge and true friendship made him very valuable. Optical studies alternated with discussions upon Art.

In this year, 1793, much was studied, but little produced. The comedy of the *Bürgergeneral* was written, that of the *Aufgeregten* was commenced, and the *Unterhaltungen der Ausgewanderten* planned. More important was the version of *Reinecke Fuchs*. All these are products of the French Revolution. The *Bürgergeneral* is really an amusing little piece, setting forth the absurdity of loud-mouthed patriotism; but it has greatly incensed all those who are angry with Goethe for not having espoused the cause of the Revolution. It is admitted that there was much in the Revolution which was hollow, foolish, and wicked; but the Revolution was too serious a thing to be treated only with ridicule. I quite agree with this opinion. But when I consider his sentiments and position, it seems to me quite natural that he who neither sympathized with the Revolution, nor absolved the Royalists; who could therefore neither write dithyrambs of freedom nor cries of indignation; who did not fully appreciate the historical importance of the event, and only saw its temporal and *personal* aspect, should have taken to Comedy, and to Comedy alone. He did not write invectives; he did not write satires. He saw the comic aspect, and he smiled. As events deepened the shadows of the picture, he, too, became more serious. The *Aufgeregten*, which was never completed, would have given a

complete expression to his political views. *Reinecke Fuchs* was commenced as a relief; it was turned to as an "unholy World-bible", wherein the human race exhibited its unadorned and unfeigned animal nature with marvellous humour, in contrast to the bloody exhibition which the Reign of Terror then offered as a spectacle to the world.

He was now, May 1794, once more to join the army which was besieging Mainz. The narrative, which is also to be found in Mr. Farie's translation, presents him in no new aspect, and may therefore be passed over with this allusion. The city capitulated on the 24th of July, and on the 28th of August—his forty-fifth birth-day—he re-entered Weimar; to finish *Reinecke Fuchs*, and to pursue his scientific researches. "I go home," he wrote to Jacobi, "where I can draw a circle round me, in which nothing can enter, save Love and Friendship, Science and Art. I will not complain of the past, for I have learnt much that was valuable." Experience is the only schoolmaster; although, as Jean Paul says, "the school-fees are somewhat heavy". Goethe was always willing to pay the fees, if he could but get the instruction.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

FRIENDSHIP WITH SCHILLER.

1794 to 1805.

"Für mich war es ein neuer Frühling, in welchem alles froh neben einander keimte, und aus aufgeschlossenen Samen und Zweigen hervorging."

Denn Er war unser! Mag das stoltze Wort
Den lauten Schmerz gewaltig übertönen.
Er mochte sich bei uns, im sichern Port
Nach wildem Sturm zum Dauernden gewöhnen.
Indessen schritt sein Geist gewaltig fort
Ins Ewige des Wahren, Guten, Schönen,
Und hinter ihm, im wesenlosen Scheine
Lag, was uns Alle bändigt, das Gemeine!

GOETHE, OF SCHILLER.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE DIOSCURI.

THERE are few nobler spectacles than the friendship of two great men; and the History of Literature presents nothing comparable to the friendship of Goethe and Schiller. The friendship of Montaigne and Etienne de la Boëtie was, perhaps, more passionate and entire; but it was the union of two kindred natures, which from the first moment discovered their affinity, not the union of two rivals incessantly contrasted by partizans, and originally disposed to hold aloof from each other. Rivals they were, and are; natures in many respects directly antagonistic; chiefs of opposing camps, and brought into brotherly union only by what was highest in their natures and their aims.

To look on these great rivals was to see at once their profound dissimilarity. Goethe's beautiful head had the calm victorious grandeur of the Greek ideal; Schiller's the earnest beauty of a Christian looking towards the Future. The massive brow, and large-pupil eyes,—like those given by Raphael to the infant Christ, in the matchless Madonna di San Sisto,—the strong and well-proportioned features, lined indeed by thought and

suffering, yet showing that thought and suffering have troubled, but not vanquished, the strong man,—a certain healthy vigour in the brown skin, and an indescribable something which shines from out the face, make Goethe a striking contrast to Schiller, with his eager eyes, narrow brow,—tense and intense,—his irregular features lined by thought and suffering, and weakened by sickness. The one *looks*, the other *looks out*. Both are majestic; but one has the majesty of repose, the other of conflict. Goethe's frame is massive, imposing; he seems much taller than he is. Schiller's frame is disproportioned, he seems less than he is. Goethe holds himself stiffly erect; the long-necked Schiller "walks like a camel".* Goethe's chest is like the torso of the Theseus; Schiller's is bent, and has lost a lung.

A similar difference is traceable in details. "An air that was beneficial to Schiller acted on me like poison," Goethe said to Eckermann. "I called on him one day, and as I did not find him at home, I seated myself at his writing-table to note down various matters. I had not been seated long, before I felt a strange indisposition steal over me, which gradually increased, until at last I nearly fainted. At first I did not know to what cause I should ascribe this wretched and to me unusual state, until I discovered that a dreadful odour issued from a drawer near me. When I opened it, I found to my astonishment that it was full of rotten apples. I immediately went to the window and inhaled the fresh air, by which I was instantly restored. Meanwhile his wife came in, and told me

* This picturesque phrase was uttered by Tieck, the sculptor, to Rauch, from whom I heard it. Let me add that Schiller's brow is called in the text "narrow", in defiance of Dannecker's bust, with which I compared Schiller's skull, and found that the sculptor, as usual, had grossly departed from truth in his desire to idealize. Artists always believe they know better than Nature.

that the drawer was always filled with rotten apples, because the scent was beneficial to Schiller, and he could not live or work without it."

As another and not unimportant detail, characterizing the healthy and unhealthy practice of literature, it may be added that Goethe wrote in the freshness of morning, entirely free from stimulus; Schiller worked in the feverish hours of night, stimulating his languid brain with coffee and champagne.

In comparing one to a Greek ideal, the other to a Christian ideal, it has already been implied that one was the representative of Realism, the other of Idealism. Goethe has himself indicated the capital distinction between them: Schiller was animated with the idea of Freedom; Goethe, on the contrary, was animated with the idea of Nature. This distinction runs through their works. Schiller always pining for something greater than Nature, wishing to make men Demigods. Goethe always striving to let Nature have free development, and produce the highest forms of Humanity. The Fall of Man was to Schiller the happiest of all events, because thereby men fell away from pure *instinct* into conscious *freedom*, and with this sense of freedom came the possibility of Morality. To Goethe this seemed paying a price for Morality which was higher than Morality was worth; he had the ideal of a condition wherein Morality was unnecessary. Much as he might prize a good police, he prized still more a society in which a police would never be needed.

But while the contrast between these two is the contrast of real and ideal, of *objective* and *subjective* tendencies, apparent when we consider the men in their totality, this is only true of them relatively to each other. To speak of Goethe as a Realist, pure and simple, is erroneous; and to speak of Schiller as an Idealist, pure and simple, is not less so. Gervinus strikingly

remarks that, compared with Nicolai or Lichtenberg, Goethe appears as an Idealist; compared with Kant and his followers, Schiller appears as a Realist. If Schiller, in comparison with Goethe, must be called a self-conscious poet, in comparison with the Romanticists, he is *naïve* and instinctive. Indeed I may repeat here what was said in a former chapter, that all such classifications are necessarily imperfect, and must only be used as artifices of language, by which certain general and predominant characteristics may be briefly indicated. Goethe and Schiller were certainly different natures; but had they been so fundamentally opposed, as it is the fashion to consider them, they could never have become so intimately united. They were opposite and allied, with somewhat of the same differences and resemblances as are traceable in the Greek and Roman Mars. In the Greek Mythology the God of War had not the prominent place he attained in the Roman; and the Greek sculptors, when they represented him, represented him as the victor returning after conflict to repose: holding in his hand the olive branch, while at his feet sits Eros. The Roman sculptors, or those who worked for Rome, represented Mars as the God of War in all his terrors, in the very act of leading on to victory. But, different as these two conceptions were, they were both conceptions of the God of War; Goethe may be likened to the one, and Schiller to the other: both were kindred spirits united by a common purpose. Nay, having touched upon the points of contrast, it will now be needful to say a word on those points of resemblance which served as the basis of their union. It will be unnecessary to instance the obvious points which two such poets must have had in common; the mention of some less obvious will suffice for our present purpose.

They were both profoundly convinced that Art was no luxury

of leisure, no mere amusement to charm the idle, or relax the careworn; but a mighty influence, serious in its aims although pleasurable in its means; a sister of Religion, by whose aid the great world-scheme was wrought into reality. This was with them no mere sonorous phrase. They were thoroughly in earnest. They believed that Culture would raise Humanity to its full powers; and they, as artists, knew no Culture equal to that of Art. It was probably a perception of this belief which made Karl Grün say, "Goethe was the most ideal Idealist the earth has ever borne; an *æsthetic* Idealist." And hence the origin of the wide-spread error that Goethe "only looked at life as an Artist", *i. e.*, cared only for human nature inasmuch as it afforded him materials for Art; a point which will be more fully examined hereafter. (*Book* VII, *ch.* 4.)

The phases of their development had been very similar, and had brought them to a similar standing-point. They both began rebelliously; they both emerged from titanic lawlessness in emerging from youth to manhood. In Italy the sight of ancient masterpieces, and the enjoyment of an exquisite climate, completed Goethe's metamorphosis. Schiller had to work through his in the gloomy north, and under the constant pressure of anxieties. He, too, pined for Italy, and thought the climate of Greece would make him a poet. But his intense and historical mind found neither stimulus nor enjoyment in plastic Art. Noble men and noble deeds were the food which nourished his great soul. "His poetic purification came from moral ideals; whereas in Goethe the moral ideal came from the artistic."* Plutarch was his Bible. The ancient masterpieces of poetry came to him in this period of his development, to lead him gently by the hand onwards to the very point where Goethe stood. He read the Greek tra-

* *Gervinus*, v, p. 152.

gedians in wretched French translations, and with such aid laboriously translated the *Iphigenia* of Euripides. Homer, in Voss's faithful version, became to him what Homer long was to Goethe. And how thoroughly he threw himself into the ancient world may be seen in his poem, *The Gods of Greece.* Like Goethe, he had found his religious opinions gradually separating him more and more from the orthodox Christians; and, like Goethe, he had woven for himself a system out of Spinoza, Kant, and the Grecian sages.

At the time, then, that these two men seemed most opposed to each other, and *were* opposed in feeling, they were gradually drawing closer and closer in the very lines of their development, and a firm basis was prepared for solid and enduring union. Goethe was five-and-forty, Schiller five-and-thirty. Goethe had much to give, which Schiller gratefully accepted; and if he could not in return influence the developed mind of his great friend, or add to the vast stores of its knowledge and experience, he could give him that which was even more valuable, *sympathy* and *impulse.* He excited Goethe to work. He withdrew him from the engrossing pursuit of science, and restored him once more to poetry. He urged him to finish what was already commenced, and not to leave his works all fragments. Working together with the same purpose and with the same earnestness, this episode is the most glorious episode in the lives of both, and remains as an eternal exemplar of a noble friendship.

Of all the tributes to Schiller's greatness which an enthusiastic people has pronounced, there is perhaps nothing which carries a greater weight of tenderness and authority than Goethe's noble praise. It is a very curious fact in the history of Shakspeare, that he is not known to have written a single line in praise of any contemporary poet. The fashion of those

days was for each poet to write verses in eulogy of his friends; and the eulogies written by Shakspeare's friends are such as to satisfy even the idolatry of admirers in our day; but there exists no eulogy, no single verse, from him whose eulogy was more worth having than that of all the rest put together.* Had literary gossip, pregnant with literary malice, produced the absurd impression that Shakspeare was cold, selfish, and self-idolatrous, this curious fact would have been made a damning proof. I have so often in these pages used Shakspeare as a contrast to Goethe, that it would be wrong not to contrast him also on this point. Of all the failings usually attributed to literary men, Goethe had the least of what could be called jealousy; of all the qualities which sit gracefully on greatness, he had the most of magnanimity. The stream of Time will carry down to after ages the memory of several whose names will live only in his praise; and the future students of Literary History will have no fact to note of Goethe similar to that noted of Shakspeare: they will see how enthusiastic was his admiration of his rivals, Schiller, Voss and Herder, and how quick he was to perceive the genius of Scott, Byron, Béranger, and Manzoni.

But I must quit this attempt to characterize the two rivals, and proceed to narrate their active co-operation in the common work.

While the great world was agitated to its depths by the rapid march of the Revolution, the little world of Weimar pursued the even tenor of its way, very much as if nothing

* There is, indeed, a couplet in the *Passionate Pilgrim* which names Spenser with high praise; but it is doubtful whether the *Passionate Pilgrim* is anything but the attempt of a bookseller to palm off on the public a work which Shakspeare never wrote; and it is certain that Shakspeare is *not* the author of the sonnet in which Spenser is mentioned, that sonnet having been previously published by a Richard Barnfield.

concerning the destinies of mankind were then in action. Because Goethe is the greatest figure in Germany, the eyes of all Germans are turned towards him, anxious to see how he bore himself in those days. They see him—not moving with the current of ideas, not actively sympathizing with events; and they find no better explanation of what they see than the brief formula that "he was an Egoist". If they look, however, at his companions and rivals, they will find a similar "indifference". Wieland, the avowed enemy of all despotism, was frightened by the Reign of Terror into demanding a dictatorship. Herder's philosophical conception of Humanity made him indifferent to any smaller question of Nationality, and a French Revolution troubled him no more than a Revolution in Spain now-a-days would trouble Auguste Comte. Nor—strange as it may appear—was Schiller, the poet of Freedom, the creator of Posa, more favourable to the French than Goethe himself. The Republic had honoured him in a singular way. It had forwarded him the diploma of citizenship, a dignity conferred at the same time on Washington, Franklin, Tom Paine, Pestalozzi, Campe, and Anacharsis Clootz! The diploma signed by Danton and Roland, dated 6th September, 1792, is now preserved in the Library at Weimar, where visitors will notice the characteristic accuracy of the French in the spelling of Schiller's name—*à Monsieur Gille, publiciste allemand.* This honour Schiller owed to his *Robbers,* or as his admirers called it, *Robert, chef de Brigands.* From the very first he had looked with no favourable eye on the Revolution, and the trial of Louis XVI produced so deep an impression on him that he commenced an address to the National Convention, which was however outrun by rapid events. Like Wieland, he saw no hope but in a dictatorship.

Such being the position of the leading minds, we are not to

wonder if we find them pursuing their avocations just as if nothing were going on in France or elsewhere. Weimar could play no part in European politics. The men of Weimar had their part to play in Literature, through which they saw a possible regeneration. Believing in the potent efficacy of culture, they devoted themselves with patriotism to that. A glance at the condition of German Literature will show how patriotism had noble work to do in such a cause. The *Leipsic Fair* was a rival to our Minerva Press: Chivalry romances, Robber-stories and Spectre-romances, old German superstitions, Augustus Lafontaine's sentimental family-pictures, and Plays of the *Sturm und Drang* style, swarmed into the sacred places of Art like another invasion of the Goths. On the stage Kotzebue was king. The *Stranger* was filling every theatre, and moving the sensibilities of a too readily-moved pit. Klopstock was becoming more and more oracular, less and less poetical. Jean Paul indeed gave signs of power and originality; but except Goethe and Schiller, Voss, who had written his *Luise* and translated *Homer*, alone seemed likely to form the chief of a school of which the nation might be proud.

It was in this state of things that Schiller conceived the plan of a periodical—*Die Horen*,—memorable in many ways to all students of German Literature. Goethe, Herder, Kant, Fichte, the Humboldts, Klopstock, Jacobi, Engel, Meyer, Garve, Matthisson, &c. were to form a phalanx whose irresistible might should speedily give them possession of the land. "The more the narrow interests of the present", says Schiller in the announcement of this work, "keep the minds of men on the stretch, and subjugate while they narrow, the more imperious is the need to free them through the higher universal interest in that which is purely *human* and removed beyond the influences of time, and thus once more to reunite the

divided political world under the banner of Truth and Beauty."

Such was the undertaking which formed the first link in the friendship of Goethe and Schiller. How they stood towards each other has been seen in the seventh chapter of Book V. One day, in May 1794, they met, coming from a lecture given by Batsch at the Natural History Society in Jena; and talking over the matter, Goethe, with pleased surprise, heard Schiller criticize the fragmentary Method which teachers of Science uniformly adopted. Thus engaged they arrived at Schiller's house, and Goethe went in with him, expounding the Theory of Metamorphoses with great warmth. Taking up a pen, he made a rapid sketch of the typical plant. Schiller listened with great attention, seizing each point clearly and rapidly, but shaking his head at last, and saying: This is not an observation, it is an Idea. "My surprise was painful, for these words clearly indicated the point which separated us. The opinions he had expressed in his essay on *Anmuth und Würde* recurred to me, and my old repulsion was nearly revived. But I mastered myself, and answered that I was delighted to find I had Ideas without knowing it, and to be able to contemplate them with my own eyes." The chasm between them was indeed both broad and deep; and Goethe truly says: "It was in a conflict between the Object and the Subject, the greatest and most interminable of all conflicts, that began our friendship, which was eternal." The beginning had been made. Schiller's wife, for whom Goethe had a strong regard, managed to bring them together; and the proposed journal, *Die Horen*, brought their activities and sympathies into friendly union. Rapid was the growth of this friendship, and on both sides beneficial. Schiller paid him a fortnight's visit at Weimar; Goethe was frequently in Jena. They found that they agreed not only on

subjects, but also on the mode of looking at them. "It will cost me a long time to unravel all the ideas you have awakened in me," writes Schiller, "but I hope none will be lost."

Regretting that he could not give the novel *Wilhelm Meister* for the *Horen*, having already promised it to a publisher, he nevertheless sends him the manuscript from the third book onwards, and gratefully profits by the friendly criticism with which Schiller reads it. He gave him, however, the two epistles, the *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*, the *Roman Elegies*, and the essay on *Literary Sansculottism*.

The mention of *Wilhelm Meister* leads us to retrace our steps a few months, when the active interest he took in the direction of the Weimar Theatre, revived his interest in this novel, over which he had dawdled so many years. He finished it; but he finished it in quite a different spirit from that in which it was commenced, and I do not at all feel that Schiller's criticisms really were of advantage to it. But of this anon.

Towards the end of July he went to Dessau, and from thence to Dresden, where he strove with Meyer to forget the troubles of the time in contemplation of the treasures of Art. "All Germany," he writes to Fritz von Stein, "is divided into anxious, croaking, or indifferent men. For myself I find nothing better than to play the part of Diogenes, and roll my tub." He returned, and daily grew more and more intimate with Schiller. They began the friendly interchange of letters, which became so rich in thought, and has since been published in six volumes, known to every student. In Goethe's letters to other friends at this time, 1795, is noticed an inward contentment, which he rightly attributes to this new influence. "It was a new spring to me," he says, "in which all seeds shot up, and gaily blossomed in my nature." Contact with Schiller's earnest mind and eager ambition, gave him the

stimulus he so long had wanted. The ordinary spurs to an author's activity—the need of money or the need of fame—pricked him not. He had no need of money; of fame he had enough, and there was no nation to be appealed to. But Schiller's restless striving, and the emulation it excited, acted like magic upon him; and the years of their friendship were for both the most productive.

On the 1st of November, another son is born to Goethe. He writes to Schiller to bring his contribution in the shape of a daughter, that the poetic family may be united and increased by a marriage. But this child only lives a few days. On the 20th, Schiller writes: "We have deeply grieved for your loss. You can console yourself with the thought that it has come so early, and thus more affects your *hopes* than your love." Goethe replies: "One knows not whether in such cases it is better to let sorrow take its natural course, or to repress it by the various aids which culture offers us. If one decides upon the latter method, *as I always do*, one is only strengthened for a moment; and I have observed that nature always asserts her right through some other crisis."

No other crisis seems to have come in this case. He was active in all directions. Göttling, in Jena, had just come forward with the discovery that phosphorus burns in nitrogen; and this drew Goethe's thoughts to Chemistry, which for a time was his recreation. Anatomy never lost its attraction; and through the snow on bitter mornings he was seen trudging to Loder's lectures, with a diligence young students might have envied. The Humboldts, especially Alexander, with whom he was in active correspondence, kept alive his scientific ardour; and it is to their energetic advice that we owe the essays on Comparative Anatomy. He was constantly talking to them on these subjects, eloquently expounding his ideas, but

would probably never have put pen to paper had they not urged him to it. True it is that he did not finish the essays; and only in 1820 did he print what he had written.* These conversations with the Humboldts embraced a wide field. "It is not perhaps presumptuous to suppose," he says, "that many ideas have thence, through *tradition*, become the common property of science, and have blossomed successfully, although the gardener who scattered the seeds is never named."

Poetical plans were numerous; some of them were carried into execution. A tragedy on the subject of "Prometheus Unbound" was begun, but never continued. The Hymn to Apollo was translated. *Alexis und Dora*, the *Vier Jahres Zeiten*, and several of the smaller poems, were written and given to Schiller for the *Horen* or the *Musen Almanach;* not to mention translations from Madame de Stael, and the "Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini." But the product of this time which made the greatest sensation was the *Xenien*.

It has already been indicated that the state of German Literature was anything but brilliant, and that public taste was very low. The *Horen* was started to raise that degraded taste by an illustrious union of "All the Talents." It came, was seen, and made *no* conquest. Mediocrity in arms assailed it in numerous journals. Public stupidity, against which, as Schiller says, "the gods themselves are powerless," was not in the least moved. The *Horen* was a failure, for it failed to pay its expenses, and it failed to excite any great admiration in the few who purchased it. Articles by the poorest writers were attributed to the greatest. Even Frederick Schlegel attributed a story by Caroline von Wolzogen to Goethe. The public was

* This detail is important, as indeed every question of date must be in science. When the Essays were published, the principal ideas had already been brought before the world; when the Essays were written, the ideas were extraordinary novelties.

puzzled—and somewhat *bored.* "All the Talents" have never yet succeeded in producing a successful periodical, and there are some good reasons for supposing that they never will. The *Horen* met with the fate of *The Liberal,* in which Byron, Shelley, Leigh Hunt, Moore, Hazlitt and Peacock were engaged. But the two great poets who had taken the greatest interest in it were not to be ignored with impunity. They resolved on a literary vengeance, and their vengeance was the *Xenien.*

A small library might be collected of the works called forth by these epigrams; but for the English reader the topic necessarily has but slender interest. He is not likely to exclaim with Boas: "On the 31st of October, 1517, was commenced the Reformation of the Church in Germany; in October 1796 commenced the Reformation of Literature. As Luther published his Theses in Wittenberg, so Goethe and Schiller published their *Xenien.* No one before had the courage so to confront sacred Dulness, so to lash all Hypocrisy." One sees that some such castigation was needed, by the loud howling which was set up from all quarters; but that any important purification of Literature was thereby effected is not so clear.

The idea was Goethe's. He came upon it in reading the *Xenia* of Martial; and having thrown off a dozen epigrams, sent them to Schiller for the *Musen Almanach.* Schiller was delighted, but said there must be a hundred of them, chiefly directed against the journals which had attacked the *Horen;* the hundred was soon thought too small a number, and it was resolved to have a thousand. They were written in the most thorough spirit of collaboration, the idea being sometimes given by one, and the form by another; one writing the first verse, and leaving the second to the other. There is no accurate separation of their epigrams, giving each to each, although critics have made an approximative selection.

The sensation was tremendous. All the bad writers in the kingdom, and they were an army, felt themselves personally aggrieved. All the pietists and sentimentalists were ridiculed; all the pedants and pedagogues were lashed. So many persons and so many opinions were scarified, that no wonder if the public ear was startled at the shrieks of pain. Counterblasts were soon heard, and the *Xenien-Sturm* will remain as a curious episode of the war of the "many foolish heads against the two wise ones." "It is amusing," writes Goethe to Schiller, "to see what has really irritated these fellows, what they believe will irritate us, how empty and low is their conception of others, how they aim their arrows merely at the outworks, and how little they dream of the inaccessible citadel inhabited by men who are in earnest." The sensation produced by the *Dunciad* and by the *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* was mild compared with the sensation produced by the *Xenien*, although the wit and sarcasm of the *Xenien* is as milk and water compared with the vitriol of the *Dunciad* and the *English Bards*.

Read by no stronger light than that which the appreciation of wit *as* wit throws on these epigrams, and not by the strong light of personal indignity or personal malice, the *Xenien* will appear very weak productions, and the sensation they excited must appear very absurd. But a similar disappointment meets the modern reader of the *Anti-Jacobin*. We know that its pages were the terror of enemies, the malicious joy of friends. We know that it was long held as a repertory of English wit, and the "Days of the *Anti-Jacobin*" are mentioned by Englishmen as the days of the *Xenien* are by Germans. Yet now that the *personal* spice is removed, we read them both with a feeling of wonder at their enormous influence. In the *Xenien* there are a few epigrams which still titillate the palate, for they have

the salt of wit in their lines. There are many also which have no pretension to wit, but are admirable expressions of critical canons and philosophic ideas. If good taste could not be created by attacks on bad taste, there was at any rate some hope that such a castigation would make certain places sore; and in this sense the *Xenien* did good service.

The publication of *Wilhelm Meister* falls within this period, and we may now proceed to examine it as a work of art.

CHAPTER II.

WILHELM MEISTER.

A FRENCHMAN, an Englishman, and a German, were commissioned, it is said, to give the world the benefit of their views on that interesting animal the Camel. Away goes the Frenchman to the *Jardin des Plantes,* spends an hour there in rapid investigation, returns, and writes a *feuilleton,* in which there is no phrase the Academy can blame, but also no phrase which adds to the general knowledge. He is perfectly satisfied, however, and says, *Le voilà, le chameau!* The Englishman packs up his tea-caddy and a magazine of comforts; pitches his tent in the East; remains there two years studying the Camel in its habits; and returns with a thick volume of facts, arranged without order, expounded without philosophy, but serving as valuable materials for all who come after him. The German, despising the frivolity of the Frenchman, and the unphilosophic matter-of-factness of the Englishman, retires to his study, there *to construct the Idea of a Camel from out of the depths of his Moral Consciousness.* And he is still at it.

With this myth the reader is introduced into the very heart of that species of criticism which, flourishing in Germany, is also admired in some English circles, under the guise of

Philosophical Criticism, and which has been exercised upon *Wilhelm Meister* almost as mercilessly as upon *Faust*, but which reaches the depths of absurdity when it treats of Shakspeare. There are many excellent critics in Germany, and I should be sorry if laughter at pretenders and pedants were supposed to extend to writers really philosophical; but in the name of Art and common-sense, I protest against the fundamental error, and the extravagant fruits, of a school which claims to be profound, and is profoundly absurd. The fundamental error is that of translating Art *into* Philosophy, and calling it the Philosophy of Art; a work is before the critic, and instead of judging this work he endeavours to get *behind* it, beneath it, into the *depths* of the soul which produced it. He is not satisfied with what the artist has *given*, he wants to know what he *meant*. He guesses at the meaning; the more remote the meaning lies on the wandering tracks of thought, the better pleased is he with the discovery, and sturdily rejects every simple explanation in favour of this exegetical Idea. Thus the phantom of Philosophy hovers mistily before Art, concealing Art from our eyes. It is true the Idea said to underlie the work was never conceived by anyone before, least of all by the Artist; but *that* is the glory of the critic: he is proud of having plunged into the *depths*. Of all horrors to the German of this school there is no horror like that of the *surface*—it is more terrible to him than cold water.

Wilhelm Meister has been the occasion of so many ideas constructed out of the depths of moral consciousness, it has been made to *mean* such wondrous (and contradictory) things, that its author must have been astonished at his unsuspecting depth. There is some obvious symbolism in the latter part, and I have little doubt it was introduced to flatter the German tendency, as I have no sort of doubt that its introduction has

spoiled a master-piece. The obvious want of unity in the work has given free play to the interpreting imagination. Hillebrand boldly says that the "Idea of *Wilhelm Meister* is precisely this—that it has no Idea",—which does not greatly further our comprehension.

Instead of trying to discover the Idea, let us stand fast by historical criticism, and see what light may be derived from a consideration of the origin and progress of the work. The historical facts assure us that the first six books—beyond all comparison the best and most important—were written before the journey to Italy: they were written during the active theatrical period when Goethe was manager, poet, and actor. The contents of these books point very clearly to his intention of representing in them the whole nature, aims, and art of the comedian; and in a letter to Merck he expressly states that it is his intention to pourtray the actor's life. Whether at the same time he meant the actor's life to be symbolical, cannot be positively determined. That may or may not have been a *secondary* intention. The primary intention is very clear. Nor had he, at this time, entered on the symbolical track in Art. He sang as the bird sings; his delight was in healthy objective fact; he had not yet donned the robes of an Egyptian priest, or learned to speak in hieroglyphs. He was seriously interested in acting, and the actor's art. He thought the life of a player a good framework for certain pictures, and he chose it. Afterwards the idea of making these pictures symbolical certainly did occur to him, and he concluded the romance upon this after-thought.

Gervinus emphatically records his disbelief of the opinion that Goethe originally intended to make Wilhelm *unfit* for success as an actor; and I think a careful perusal of the novel, even in its present state, will convince the reader that Ger-

vinus is right. Instead of Wilhelm's career being represented as the development of a false tendency—the obstinate cultivation of an imperfect talent, such as was displayed in Goethe's own case with respect to plastic Art—one sees, in spite of some subsequent additions thrown in to modify the work according to an after-thought, that Wilhelm has a true inborn tendency, a talent which ripens through practice. With the performance of *Hamlet* the apogee is reached; and here ends the first plan. Having written so far, Goethe went to Italy. We have seen the changes which came over his views. After a lapse of ten years he resumes the novel; and having in that period lived through the experience of a false tendency—having seen the vanity of cultivating an imperfect talent—he *alters* the plan of his novel, makes it symbolical of the erroneous striving of youth towards culture; invents the cumbrous machinery of a Mysterious Family whose watchful love has guided all his steps, and who have encouraged him in error that they might lead him through error unto truth. This is what in his old age he declared—in the *Tag und Jahres Hefte*, and in his letters to Schiller—to have been the plan upon which it was composed. "It sprang", he says, "from a dim feeling of the great truth that Man often seeks that which Nature has rendered impossible to him. All dilettantism and false tendency is of this kind. Yet it is possible that every false step should lead to an inestimable good, and some intimation of this is given in Meister." To Eckermann he said: "The work is one of the most incalculable productions; *I myself can scarcely be said to have the key to it.* People seek a central point, and that is difficult to find; nor is it even right. I should think a *rich manifold life brought close to our eyes would be enough in itself without any express tendency*, which, after all, is only for the in-

tellect." This is piercing to the very kernel. The origin of the symbolical matter, however, lies in the demands of the German intellect for such food. "But," he continues, "if anything of the kind is insisted upon, it will, perhaps, be found in the words which Frederic at the end addresses to the hero, when he says, 'Thou seem'st to me like Saul, the son of Kish, who went out to seek his father's asses, and found a kingdom.' Keep only to this; for, in fact, the whole work seems to say nothing more than that man, despite all his follies and errors, being led by a higher hand, reaches some happy goal at last."

Schiller, who knew only the *second* plan, objected, and with justice, to the disproportionate space allotted to the players. "It looks occasionally," he wrote, "as if you were writing *for* players, whereas your purpose is only to write *of* them. The care you bestow on certain little details of this subject and individual excellencies of the art, which although important to the player and manager, are not so to the public, give to your representation the false appearance of a particular design; and even one who does not infer such a design, might accuse you of being too much under the influence of a private preference for these subjects." If we accept the later plan, we must point out the inartistic composition, which allows five Books of Introduction, one of Episode, and only two of Development. This is against all proportion. Yet Frederick Schlegel expressly says that the two last Books are properly speaking the whole work; the others are but preparations.*

The purpose, or rather purposes, of *Wilhelm Meister* are, first, the rehabilitation of Dramatic Art; and, secondly, the theory of Education. The last two Books are full of Education.

* *Charakteristiken und Kritiken*, p. 108. Schlegel's review is well worth reading as an example of ingenious criticism, and praise artfully presented under the guise of analysis.

Very wise and profound thoughts are expressed, and these thoughts redeem the triviality of the machinery. But otherwise these Books are lamentably inferior to the first six Books in style, in character, in interest. On the whole, *Wilhelm Meister* is, indeed, "an incalculable work". Several readings have intensified my admiration (which at first was tepid), and intensified also the sense of its defects. The beauties are ever new, ever wonderful; the faults press themselves upon notice as sharply as they did at first. There are readers, indeed, who do not see these defects, or who see them with less impatience; but as I am here expressing my opinions, and not theirs, they must pardon the frankness of the expression.

The story opens with great dramatic vivacity. Mariana and old Barbara stand before us, sketched with Shakspearian sharpness of outline and truth of detail. The whole episode is admirable, if we except the lengthy and somewhat trivial narrative in which Wilhelm details his early passion for the Marionnettes; a narrative which has probably made some readers as drowsy as it made Mariana. The contrast between Wilhelm and the prosaic Werner is also felicitously touched. But the happiest traits are those which show Wilhelm's want of decision and incapacity of finishing the work he has begun; traits which indicate his peculiar temperament. Indeed throughout the novel Wilhelm is not the hero, but a creature of the incidents. He is a mere nose-of-wax. And this is artfully designed. Egmont and Goetz are heroes: living in stormy times, they remain altogether uninfluenced by the times. The purpose of the poet was to represent noble characters, and he represents them in their strong, clear individuality, superior to circumstance. With Wilhelm, the poet had another aim, the aim of showing how some characters change, obedient to every external influence. The metamorphoses of

Wilhelm would have been impossible with a character such as Egmont. This seems so obvious, that one is surprised to find critics objecting to the vacillating character of Wilhelm, as if it were a fault in art. It would be as reasonable to object to the vacillations of Hamlet. Wilhelm is not only led with ease from one thing to another, but is always oscillating in his views of himself. Even his emotions are not persistent. He passes from love of the passionate Mariana to an inclination for the coquettish Philina; from Philina to the Countess, whom he immediately forgets for the Amazon; he is about to marry Theresa, but relinquishes her as soon as he is accepted, and offers himself to Natalie.

There is in this novel, evidence of sufficient humour to have made a decidedly humorous writer, had that faculty not been kept in abeyance by other faculties. Wilhelm's unconscious pedantry, and his predominant desire to see the drama illustrated in ordinary life, and to arrange life into a theatre;* the Count and his eccentricities; the adventures of the players in the castle where they arrive, and find all the urgent necessaries wanting; the costume in which Wilhelm decks himself; the whole character of Philina and that of Frederic—are instances of this humorous power.

To tell the story of this novel would be too great an injustice to it; the reader has therefore, it must be presupposed, already some acquaintance with it; in default thereof, let him at once make its acquaintance.† The narrative being presupposed as known, my task is easy. I have only to refer to the marvellous art with which the characters unfold themselves. We see them, and see through them. They are never described,

* See especially Book I, cap. 15, for his idea of the private life of players, as if they carried *off* the stage something of their parts *on* the stage.

† It has been translated by Carlyle.

they exhibit themselves. Philina, for example, one of the most bewitching and original creations in fiction, whom we know as well as if she had flirted with us and jilted us, is never once described. Even her person is made present to us through the impression it makes on others, not by any direct information. We are not told that she was a strange mixture of carelessness, generosity, caprice, wilfulness, affectionateness, and gaiety; a lively girl, of French disposition, with the smallest possible regard for decorum, but with a true decorum of her own; snapping her fingers at the world, disliking conventions, tediousness, and pedantry; without any ideal aspirations, yet also without any affectations; coquetting with all the men, disliked by all the women, turning everyone round her finger, yet ready to oblige and befriend even those who had injured her. We are not told this; but as such she lives before us. She is so genuine and so charming a sinner that we forgive all her trespasses. On the whole, she is the most original and most difficult creation in the book. Mignon, the great poetical creation, was less difficult to draw, when once conceived. All the other characters serve as contrasts to Philina. She moves among them and throws them into relief, as they do her. The sentimental sickly Aurelia, and the sentimental Madame Melina, have an earnestness Philina does not comprehend; but they have the faults of their qualities, and she has neither. She has no more sense of earnestness than a bird. With bird-like gaiety and bird-like enjoyment of existence she chirrups through sunshine and rain. One never thinks of demanding morality from her. Morality? she knows it not; has not even a bowing acquaintance with it! Nor can she be called immoral. Contrasting her with Mignon, we see her in contrast with Innocence, Earnestness, Devotion, and vague yearnings for a distant home; for Philina was never

innocent, she is as quick and clever as a kitten; she cannot be serious: if she does not laugh she must yawn or cry; devoted she cannot be, although affectionate; and for a distant home, how can that trouble one who knows how to nestle everywhere? It is possible to say very hard words of Philina; but, like many a "naughty child", she disarms severity by her grace.

Of Mignon and her songs I need say nothing. Painters have tried to give an image of that strange creation which lures the imagination and the heart of every reader; but she defies the power of the pencil. The old Harper is a wild weird figure, bearing a mystery about with him, which his story at the close finely clears up. He not only adds to the variety of the figures in the novel, but by his songs gives a depth of passion and suffering to the work which would otherwise move too exclusively in familiar regions. These two poetic figures, rising from the prosaic back-ground, suggest an out-lying world of beauty; they have the effect of a rainbow in the London streets. Serlo, Laertes, the selfish Melina, and his sentimental wife, are less developed characters, yet drawn with a masterly skill. But when we quit their company—that is, when we quit the parts which were written before the journey to Italy, and before the plan was altered—we arrive at characters such as Lothario, the Abbé, the Doctor, Teresa, and Natalie, and feel that a totally new style is present. We have quitted the fresh air of Nature, and entered the philosopher's study; life is displaced by abstractions. Not only does the interest of the story seriously fall off, but the handling of the characters is entirely changed. The characters are described; they do not live. The incidents are crowded, have little vraisemblance and less interest. The diction has become weak—sometimes positively bad. As the men and women are without passion, so is the style without colour. Schiller, writing of the first book, says:

"The bold poetic passages, which flash up from the calm current of the whole, have an excellent effect; they elevate and fill the soul." But the style of the last two Books, with the exception of the exquisite Harper's story, is such that in England the novel is almost universally pronounced tedious, in spite of the wonderful truth and variety of character, and the beauty of so many parts. In these later Books the narrative is slow, and carries incidents trivial and improbable. The Mysterious Family in the Tower is an absurd mystification; without the redeeming interest which Mrs. Radcliffe would have thrown into it. With respect to the style, it is enough to open at random, and you are tolerably certain to alight upon a passage which it is difficult to believe Goethe would have *written* (he dictated these books). The iteration of certain set forms of phrase, and the abstractness of the diction, are very noticeable. Here is a sentence! "Sie können aber hieraus die unglaubliche Toleranz jener Männer sehen, dass sie eben auch mich auf meinem *Wege* gerade *deswegen*, weil es mein *Weg* ist, keines*wegs* stören."

One great peculiarity in this work is that which probably made Novalis call it "artistic Atheism."* This phrase is easily uttered, sounds well, is open to many interpretations, and is therefore sure to find echoes. I take it to mean that in *Wilhelm Meister* there is a complete absence of all *moral verdict* on the part of the author. Characters tread the stage, events pass before our eyes, things are done and thoughts are expressed; but no word comes from the author respecting the moral bearing of these things. Life forgets in activity all

* "Das Buch handelt bloss von gewöhnlichen Dingen, die Natur und der Mysticismus sind ganz vergessen. Es ist eine poetisirte bürgerliche und häusliche Geschichte; das Wunderbare darin wird ausdrücklich als Poesie und Schwärmerei behandelt. Künstlerischer Atheismus ist der Geist des Buchs." *Schriften*, II, p. 367.

moral verdict. The good is beneficent, but no one praises it; the bad works evil, but no one anathematizes it. It is a world in which we see no trace of the preacher, not a glimpse even of his surplice. To many readers this absence is like the absence of salt at dinner. They feel towards such simple objective delineation something of the repugnance felt in Evangelical circles to Miss Edgeworth's Tales. It puts them out. Robert Hall confessed that reading Miss Edgeworth hindered him for weeks in his clerical functions; he was completely disturbed by her pictures of a world of happy active people *without* any visible interference of religion—a sensible, and on the whole, healthy world, yet without "warnings," without "exhortations," without any apparent terrors concerning the state of souls.

Much has been said about the immorality of *Wilhelm Meister*, which need not be repeated here. Schiller hits the mark in his reply to what Jacobi said on this point: "The criticism of Jacobi has not at all surprised me; for it is as inevitable that an individual like him should be offended by the unsparing truth of your pictures, as it is that a mind like yours should give him cause to be so. Jacobi is one of those who seek only their own ideas in the representation of Poets, and prize more what *should be* than *what is;* the contest therefore begins in first principles. So soon as a man lets me see that there is anything in poetical representations that interests him more than internal necessity and truth, I give him up. If he could show you that the immorality of your pictures does not proceed from the nature of the subject but from the manner in which you treat it, then indeed would you be accountable, nof because you had sinned against moral laws, but against critical laws."

Wilhelm Meister is not a moral story, that is to say not a story written with the express purpose of illustrating one of

the many maxims in which our ethical systems are expressed. The consequence is that it is frequently pronounced immoral; which I conceive to be an absurd judgment; for if it have no express moral purpose, guiding and animating all the scenes, neither has it an immoral purpose. It may not be written for the edification of virtue; assuredly it is not written for the propagation of vice. If its author is nowhere a preacher, he cannot by his sternest critics be called a pander. All that can be said is that the Artist has been content to paint scenes of life, *without comment;* and that some of these scenes belong to an extensive class of subjects, familiar indeed to the experience of all but children, yet by general consent not much talked of "in society." If any reader can be morally injured by reading such scenes in this novel rather than in the newspaper, his moral constitution is so alarmingly delicate and so susceptible of injury, that he is truly pitiable. Let us hope the world is peopled with robuster natures; a robuster nature need not be alarmed.

But while asserting *Wilhelm Meister* to be in no respect a Moral Tale, I am bound to declare that deep and healthy moral meaning lies in it, pulses through it, speaking in many tones to him who hath ears to hear it. But "herein the patient must administer to himself." What each reader will see in it will depend on his insight and experience. Sometimes this meaning results from the whole course of the narrative; such for example as the influence of life upon Wilhelm in moulding and modifying his character, raising it from mere impulse to the subordination of reason, from dreaming self-indulgence to practical duty, from self-culture to sympathy; but the way this lesson is taught is the artist's not the preacher's way, and therefore may be missed by those who wait for the moral to be "pointed" before they are awake to its significance.

The "Confessions of a Fair Saint," which occupy the Sixth Book, have, in some circles, embalmed what was pronounced the corruption of the other books. Stolberg burned all the rest of the work, and kept these chapters as a treasure. Curious indeed is the picture presented of a quiet mystic, who is at the same time an original and strongly marked character; and the effect of religious convictions on life is subtly delineated in the gradual encroachment and final predominance of mysticism on the mind of one who seemed every way so well fitted for the world. Nevertheless, while duly appreciating the picture, I regret that it was not published separately, for it interrupts the story in a most inartistic manner, and has really nothing to do with the rest of the work.

The criticism on *Hamlet*, which Wilhelm makes, still remains the best criticism we have on that wonderful play. Very artfully is *Hamlet* made as it were a part of the novel; and Rosenkrantz praises its introduction not only because it illustrates the affinity between Hamlet and Wilhelm, both of whom are reflective, vacillating characters, but because Hamlet is further allied to Wilhelm in making the play a touchstone, whereby to detect the truth, and determine his own actions.

Were space at disposal, the whole of Schiller's criticism on this work might fitly be given here from his enthusiastic letters; but I must content myself with one extract, which is quite delightful to read: "I account it the most fortunate incident in my existence, that I have lived to see the completion of this work; that it has taken place while my faculties are still capable of improvement; that I can yet draw from this pure spring; and the beautiful relation there is between us makes it a kind of religion with me to feel towards what is yours as if it were my own, and so to purify and elevate my nature that my mind may be a clear mirror, and that I may thus deserve, in a

higher sense, the name of your friend. How strongly have I felt on this occasion that the Excellent is a power; that by selfish natures it can be felt only as a power; and that only where there is disinterested love can it be enjoyed. I cannot describe to you how deeply the truth, the beautiful vitality, the simple fulness of this work has affected me. The excitement into which it has thrown my mind will subside when I shall have perfectly mastered it, and that will be an important crisis in my being. This excitement is the effect of the beautiful, and only the beautiful, and proceeds from the fact that my intellect is not yet entirely in accordance with my feelings. I understand now perfectly what you mean when you say that it is strictly the beautiful, the true, that can move you even to tears. Tranquil and deep, clear, and yet like nature unintelligible, is this work; and all, even the most trivial collateral incident, shows the clearness, the equanimity of the mind whence it flowed."

CHAPTER III.

THE ROMANTIC SCHOOL.

"AFTER the mad challenge of the Xenien," writes Goethe to Schiller, "we must busy ourselves only with great and worthy works of Art, and shame our opponents by the manifestation of our poetical natures in forms of the Good and Noble." This trumpet-sound found Schiller alert. The two earnest men went earnestly to work, and produced their matchless ballads, and their great poems *Hermann und Dorothea* and *Wallenstein*. The influence of these men on each other was very peculiar. It made Goethe speculative and theoretical, in contradiction to his native tendency. It made Schiller realistic, in contradiction to his native tendency. Had it not urged Goethe to rapid production, we should have called the influence wholly noxious; but seeing what was produced, makes us pause ere we condemn. "You have created a new youth for me," writes Goethe, "and once more restored me to Poetry, which I had almost entirely given up." They were both much troubled with Philosophy at this epoch. Kant and Spinoza occupied Schiller; Kant and scientific theories occupied Goethe. They were both, moreover, becoming more and more imbued with the spirit of ancient Art, and were bent on

restoring its principles. They were men of genius, and therefore these two false tendencies—the tendency to Reflection, and the tendency to Imitation—were less hurtful to *their* works than to the national culture. Their genius saved them, in spite of their errors; but their errors misled the nation. It is remarked by Gervinus, that "Philosophy was restored in the year 1781, and profoundly affected all Germany. Let any one draw up a statistical table of our literary productions, and he will be amazed at the decadence of Poetry during the last fifty years in which Philosophy has been supreme." Philosophy has distorted Poetry, and been the curse of Criticism. It has crippled Art by a consciousness and a desire for theorizing, which great artists usually leave to critics.* It has vitiated German Literature; and it produced, in combination with the tendency to Imitation, that brilliant error known as the Romantic School.

A few words on this much-talked of school may not be unacceptable. Like its offspring, *L'École Romantique* in France, it had a critical purpose which was good, and a retrograde purpose which was bad. Both were insurgent against narrow critical canons, both proclaimed the superiority of Mediæval Art; both sought, in Catholicism and in national Legends, meanings profounder than those current in the literature of the day. In other respects these schools greatly differed. The Schlegels, Tieck, Novalis, and Werner, had no enemy to combat in the shape of a severe National Taste, such as opposed the tentatives of Victor Hugo, Dumas, and Alfred de Vigny. On the contrary, they were supported by a large body of the nation, for their theories only carried further certain tendencies which had become general. Thus in as far

* "If you once think of *how* you are to do it you will never do anything," said Mozart; "I write because I cannot help it."

as these theories were critical, they were little more than jubilates over the victorious campaigns won by Lessing, Herder, Goethe, and Schiller. The Schlegels stood upon the battle-field, now silent, and sang a hymn of victory over the bodies of the slain. Frederick Schlegel, by many degrees the most considerable critic of this school, began his career with an Anthology from Lessing's works: *Lessing's Geist; eine Blumenlese seiner Ansichten;* he ended it with admiration for Philip the Second and the cruel Alva, and with the proclamation that Calderon was a greater poet than Shakspeare. Frederick Schlegel thus represents the whole Romantic School from its origin to its close.

Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher, and Solger are the philosophers of this school; from the two former came the once famous, now almost forgotten, principle of "Irony", which Hegel* not only disposed of as a principle, but showed that the critics themselves made no use of it. Indeed, the only serious instance of its application I remember, is the ingenious Essay by Schleiermacher on the "Irony of Sophocles", translated for the *Classical Museum* by the present Bishop of St. David's. No one, not even Tieck, attempted to exhibit the "irony" of Shakspeare, the god of their idolatry. Among the services rendered by Tieck and A. W. Schlegel, the translation of Shakspeare must never be forgotten, for although that translation is by no means so accurate as Germans suppose, being often miserably weak, and sometimes grossly mistaken in its interpretation of the meaning, it is nevertheless a translation which, on the whole, has, perhaps, no rival in literature, and has served to make Shakspeare as familiar to the Germans as to us.

In their crusade against the French, in their naturalization

* *Æsthetik*, I, p. 84-90.

of Shakspeare, and their furtherance of Herder's efforts towards the restoration of a Ballad Literature and the taste for Gothic Architecture, these Romanticists were with the stream. They also flattered the national tendencies when they proclaimed "Mythology and Poetry, symbolical Legend and Art to be one and indivisible",* whereby it became clear that a new Religion, or at any rate a new Mythology, was needed, for "the deepest want and deficiency of all modern Art lies in the fact that the artists have no Mythology".†

While Fichte, Schelling, and Schleiermacher were tormented with the desire to create a new philosophy and a new religion, it soon became evident that a Mythology was not to be created by programme; and as a Mythology was indispensable, the Romanticists betook themselves to Catholicism, with its saintly Legends and saintly Heroes; some of them, as Tieck and A. W. Schlegel, out of nothing more than poetic enthusiasm and dilettantism: others, as F. Schlegel and Werner, with thorough conviction, accepting Catholicism and all its consequences.

Solger had called Irony the daughter of Mysticism; and how highly these Romanticists prized Mysticism is known to all readers of Novalis. To be mystical was to be poetical as well as profound; and our critics glorified mediæval monstrosities because of "their deep spiritualism", which stood in contrast with the pagan materialism of Goethe and Schiller. Once commenced, this movement rushed rapidly onwards to the confines of nonsense. Art became the handmaid of Religion. The universal canon was laid down (and still lingers in some quarters), that only in the service of Religion had Art ever flourished,—only in that service *could* it flourish. Art became a propagande. Fra Angelico and Calderon suddenly became idols. Theory was bursting with absurdities. Werner

* F. Schlegel: *Gespräche über Poesie*, p. 263. † Ibid. p. 274.

was proclaimed a Colossus by Wackenroder, who wrote his *Herzensergiessungen eines Kunstliebenden Klosterbruders*, with Tieck's aid, to prove, said Goethe, that because some monks were artists, all artists should turn monks. Then it was men looked to Faith for miracles in Art. Devout study of the Bible was thought to be the readiest means of rivalling Fra Angelico and Van Eyck; a hair-shirt was inspiration. The painters went over in crowds to the Roman Church. Cornelius and Overbeck lent real genius to the attempt to revive the dead forms of early Christian Art, as Goethe and Schiller did to revive the dead forms of Grecian Art. Overbeck, who painted in a cloister, was so thoroughly penetrated by the ascetic spirit, that he refused to draw from the living model, lest it should make his works too *naturalistic;* for to be true to Nature was tantamount to being false to the higher tendencies of Spiritualism. Cornelius, more of an artist, had too much of the artistic instinct to carry his principles into these exaggerations; but others less gifted, and more bigoted, carried those principles into every excess. A band of these reformers established themselves in Rome, and astonished the Catholics quite as much as the Protestants. Cesar Masini in his work *Dei Puristi in Pittura* thus describes them: "Several young men came to Rome from Northern Germany in 1809. They abjured Protestantism, adopted the costume of the Middle Ages, and began to preach the doctrine that painting had died out with Giotto, and to revive it a recurrence to the old style was necessary. Under such a mask of piety they concealed their nullity. Servile admirers of the rudest periods in Art, they declared the pigmies were giants, and wanted to bring us back to the dry hard style and barbarous imperfection of a Buffalmacco, Calandrino, Paolo Uccello, when we had a Raphael, a Titian, and a Correggio." In spite of the exaggera-

tions of these admirers of the Trecentisti, in spite of a doctrine which was fundamentally vicious, the Romanticists made a decided revolution, and they still keep the lead in painting. Whatever may be thought of the "German School", it must be confessed that until Overbeck, Cornelius, Schadow, Hess, Lessing, Hübner, Sohn, and Kaulbach, the Germans had no painters at all; and they have in these men painters of very remarkable power.*

Such was the new school and its doctrine. Raphael is not more antagonistic to Fra Angelico, Titian is not more antagonistic to Albert Durer, than Goethe and Schiller were to the hectic Novalis and the dandy Schlegel. Nevertheless it is certain that their culture of Reflection on the one hand, and of Imitation on the other, aided the Romantic movement more than their own works and strivings retarded it. That movement has long come to a stand-still in literature, and its judgment has been pronounced; but with much obvious mischief it brought many obvious advantages, and no student of modern literature will refuse his acknowledgment to the services rendered by Romanticism in making the Middle Ages more thoroughly understood.

To return to Goethe. He was, as I said, led by Schiller into endless theoretical discussions. They philosophized on the limits of epic and dramatic poetry; read and discussed Aristotle's Poetics, which resulted in Goethe's essay, *Ueber epische und dramatische Poesie;* and, as we gather from their correspondence, scarcely ventured to take a step until they had seen how Theory justified it. Wolf's *Prolegomena* to Homer,

* Our own Pre Raphaelite School is a child of the Romantic School. Success is assured by the genius of Millais and Hunt, in spite of the theoretical doctrines they maintain, and by their fidelity to Nature; in this latter respect they are the opposites of the Romanticists.

Goethe read with enthusiasm, and at once espoused its principles.* The train of thought thus excited, led him from the origin of epic songs to the origin of the Hebrew songs, and Eichhorn's *Introduction to the Old Testament* led him to attempt a new explanation of the wanderings of the people of Israel, which he subsequently inserted in the notes to the *West-östliche Divan.*

Nor was he only busy with epical theories; he also gave himself to the production of epics. *Hermann und Dorothea,* the most perfect of his poems, was written at this time. *Achilleis* was planned, and partly executed; *Die Jagd* was also planned, but left unwritten, and subsequently became the prose tale known as *die Novelle.* This year of 1797 is moreover memorable as the "year of ballads", in which he and Schiller, in friendly rivalry, gave Germany lyrical masterpieces. His share may be estimated, when we learn that in this year were written the *Bride of Corinth,* the *Zauberlehrling, der Gott und die Bajadere,* and the *Schatzgräber.*

In the same year *Faust* was once more taken up, lying as it did so thoroughly in the track of thought of the ballads. The *Dedication* was written; the *Prologue in Heaven;* and the Intermezzo of *Oberon and Titania's Marriage.* But while he was in this mood, Hirt came to Weimar, and in the lively reminiscences of Italy, and the eager discussions of Art which his arrival awakened, all the northern phantoms were exorcised by southern magic. He gave up *Faust,* and wrote an essay on the *Laokoon.* He began once more to pine for Italy. This is characteristic of his insatiable hunger for knowledge; he never

* Later on in life he returned to the old conviction of the unity of Homer. It is much to be regretted that in England Wolf's masterly work is seldom read, the critics contenting themselves with second-hand statements of his views, which do them great injustice.

seemed to have mastered *material* enough. Whereas Schiller, so much poorer in material, and so much more inclined to production, thought this Italian journey would only embarrass him with fresh objects; and urged Meyer to dissuade him from it. He did not go; and I think Schiller's opinion was correct: at the point now reached he had nothing to do but to give a Form to the materials he had accumulated.

In the July of this year he, for the third time, made a journey into Switzerland. In Frankfurt he introduced Christiane and her boy to his Mother, who received them very heartily, and made the few days' stay there very agreeable. It is unnecessary for us to follow him on this journey, which is biographically interesting only in respect to the plan of an epic on *William Tell* which he conceived, and for which he studied the localities. The plan was never executed. He handed it over to Schiller for his drama on that subject, giving him at the same time the idea of the character of Tell, and the studies of localities, which Schiller managed to employ with a mastery quite astonishing to his friend. The same brotherly co-operation is seen in the composition of *Wallenstein*. It is not true, as was currently supposed in Germany, that Goethe wrote any portions of that work. He has told us himself he only wrote two unimportant lines. But his counsel aided Schiller through every scene; and the bringing it on the stage was to him like a triumph of his own.

In the spring of 1798 Schelling's Philosophy of Nature, and his own plans for a History of the Theory of Colours, lured him from poetry; but Schiller again brought him back to it. *Faust* was resumed, and the last tragic scenes of the First Part were written. In the summer he was much at Jena with Schiller, consequently with poetry. Achilles and Tell, the ancient and the modern world, as Schäfer remarks, struggled for priority,

but neither obtained it, because he was still perplexed in his epic theories. The studies of the *Iliad* had "hunted him through the circle of enthusiasm, hope, insight, and despair." No sooner did he leave Jena than, as he confessed, he was drawn by another polarity. Accordingly, we see him busy with an art-journal, the *Propyläen.* He was also busy with the alteration of the Theatre, the boards of which, on the 12th of October 1798, were made for ever memorable by the production of *Wallenstein's Camp* and *Prologue.* On the 30th of January 1799, the birthday of the Duchess Luise, the *Piccolomini* was produced; and, on the 20th of April, *Wallenstein's Tod.*

It was in this year that a young Writer to the Signet, in Edinburgh, put forth a translation of *Götz von Berlichingen,* and preluded to a fame as great as Goethe's own; and it was in the December of this year that Karl August's generosity enabled Schiller to quit Jena, and come to Weimar for the rest of his life, there in uninterrupted intercourse with Goethe to pursue the plans so dear to both, especially in the formation of a national stage. I will take advantage of this change to insert a chapter on *Hermann und Dorothea,* which was published in 1796-7; and I will afterwards group together the scattered details of the theatrical management, so as to place them before the reader in a continuous narrative.

CHAPTER IV.

HERMANN UND DOROTHEA.

The pleasure every one finds in making acquaintance with the original stories from which Shakspeare created his marvellous plays, is the pleasure of detecting how genius can improve upon the merest hint, and how with its own vital forces it converts lifeless material into immortal life. This pleasure also carries the conviction that there is no lack of subjects for an artist, if he have but the eye to see them. It shows us that great poets are not accustomed to cast about for subjects worthy of treatment; on the contrary, the merest hint is enough to form the nucleus of a splendid work: a random phrase will kindle a magnificent conception.

Very like the material offered by Bandello to Shakspeare is the material offered to Goethe by the old narrative* from which he created one of the most faultless of modern poems. Herein we learn how a rich and important citizen of Altmühl has in vain tried to persuade his son to marry. The Saltzburg

* *Das Liebthätige Gera gegen die Salzburgischen Emigranten. Das ist: kurze und wahrhaftige Erzählung wie dieselben in der Gräflich Reuss Plauischen Residenz Stadt angekommen, aufgenommen, und versorget, auch was an und von vielen derselben Gutes gesehen und gehöret worden.* Leipzig: 1732.

emigrants pass through the town, and among them the son finds "a maiden who pleases him right well;" he inquires after her family and bringing up, and as all he hears is satisfactory, away he hies to his father, declaring that unless this Saltzburg maiden be given him, he will remain unmarried all his life. The father, aided by the pastor, tries to persuade him from such a resolution. But their efforts being vain, the pastor advises the father to give his consent, which is done. Away goes the son to the maiden, and asks her if she is willing to enter his father's domestic service. She accepts, and is presented to the father. But he, ignorant of his son's *ruse*, and believing he sees before him the betrothed, asks her whether she is fond of his son. The maiden thinks they are laughing at her, but on learning they are serious in wishing her to belong to the family, declares herself quite ready, and draws from her bosom a purse containing 200 ducats, which she hands to her bridegroom as her dowry.

This is the story out of which grew *Hermann und Dorothea*. An ordinary story, in which the poet alone could see a poem; *what* he has seen every reader of German literature well knows; and those to whom the poem is unknown must be content with the following analysis.

The epoch is changed to that of the French Revolution. The emigrants are driven from home by political events. The scene is on the right side of the Rhine. The streets of a quiet little village are noisy with unaccustomed movement, every one is crowding to see the sad procession of Emigrants passing through, in the heat and dust of a summer afternoon. Mine Host of the Golden Lion, sitting at his doorway, marvels at such curiosity, but applauds the active benevolence of his wife, who has sent their son with linen, food and drink, to bestow upon the sufferers, "for to give is the duty of those who have."

And now are seen returning some of the curious. See how dusty their shoes! and how their faces are burning! They come back wiping the perspiration from their glowing faces; the old couple rejoice that they have sat quiet at home, contenting themselves with what will be told them of the sight. Sure enough, here comes the Pastor, and with him the Apothecary; seating themselves on the wooden bench, they shake the dust off their shoes, and fan their hot faces with their handkerchiefs. They narrate what they have seen; and mine host, sighing, hopes his son will overtake the Emigrants, and give them what has been sent. But the heat suggests to him that they should retire into the cool back parlour, and, out of the way of the flies, refresh themselves with a bottle of Rhine wine. There, over the wine, mine host expresses his wish to see his son married. This is the whole of the first canto; and yet, slight as the material is, the wonderful objective treatment gives it substance. The scene lives before us. The fresh air of the country breathes from the verse.

In the second canto Hermann appears before his father and friends. The Pastor's quick eye detects that he is returned an altered man. Hermann narrates how he accomplished his mission. Overtaking the Emigrants, he fell in with a cart drawn by oxen, wherein lay a poor woman beside the infant to which she had just given birth. Leading the oxen was a maiden, who came towards him with the calm confidence of a generous soul, and begged his aid for the poor woman whom she had just assisted in her travail. Touched with pity, and feeling at once that this maiden was the best person to distribute justly the aid he had brought, Hermann gave it all into her hands. They parted, she gratefully pursuing her sad journey, he thoughtfully returning home. Love has leaped into his heart, and, by the light of his smile, the Pastor sees he is an altered man.

On hearing his tale, the Apothecary hugs himself with the consolation of not having wife and children to make him anxious in these anxious times; "the single man escapes the easiest." But Hermann reproves him asking, "Is it well that a man should feel himself alone in joy and sorrow, not understanding how to share these joys and sorrows? I never was so willing to marry as to-day; for many a good maiden needs the protection of a husband, and many a man needs the bright consolation of a wife, in the shadow of misfortune." Hereupon the father, smiling, exclaims, "I hear you with pleasure; such a sensible word you have seldom uttered." And his mother also applauds him, referring to her marriage as an example. Memory travels back complacently to the day of her betrothal. It was in the midst of misfortune—a fire had destroyed all their property—but in that hour of misfortune their union was decided. The father here breaks in, and says the story is true, but evidently wishes to warn his son from any imitation of his own venture. With admirable art and humour his fatherly anxiety is depicted. He married a girl who had nothing when he himself had nothing; but now, when he is old and well to do in the world, this idea of beginning life upon no solid foundation of fortune is alarming to him. He paints the difficulties of keeping house, the advantages of fortune, and concludes with a decisive intimation to Hermann that he expects a rich daughter-in-law to be brought into the house. He indicates the daughters of a rich neighbour, and wishes Hermann to select one. But Hermann has not only a new love in his heart, he has an old repugnance to these rich neighbours, who mocked his simplicity, and ridiculed him because he was not as familiar with the personages of an opera as they were. This enrages his father, who upbraids him for being a mere peasant without culture, and who angrily declares

he will have no peasant-girl brought into the house as his daughter-in-law, but a girl who can play the piano, and who can draw around her the finest people of the town. Hermann, in silence, quits the room; and thus closes the second canto.

The third canto carries on the story. Mine host continues his angry eloquence. It is his opinion that the son should always rise higher in the social scale than the father; for what would become of the house, or the nation, without this constant progress? "You are always unjust to your son," replies the mother, "and thus frustrate your own wishes. We must not hope to form children after our notions. As God has given them us, so must we have them and love them, bring them up as we best can, and let them have their own disposition. For some have this and others that gift. One is happy in one way, another in another. I won't have my Hermann abused. He is an excellent creature. But with daily snubbing and blame you crush his spirit." And away she goes to seek her son. "A wonderful race the women," says the host, smiling as his wife departs, "just like children. They all want to live after their own fashion, and yet be praised and caressed!" The old Apothecary, carrying out the host's argument respecting the continual improvement of one's station, happily displays his character by a speech of quiet humour, describing his own anxiety to improve the appearance of his house, and how he has always been hindered by the fear of the expense. The contrast of characters in this poem is of the finest and sharpest: mother and father, Pastor and Apothecary, all stand before us in distinctive, yet unobtrusive, individuality, such as only the perfection of Art achieves.

In the fourth canto, the mother seeks her son. The description of this search is a striking specimen of Goethe's descriptive poetry, being a series of pictures without a metaphor, without

an image, without any of the picturesque aids which most poets employ; and yet it is vivid and picturesque in the highest degree. I wish I dared quote it. But the reader of German can seek it in the original; and translation is more than ever unjust to a poet, where style is in question.

In the stable she seeks him, expecting to find him with his favourite stallion; then she goes into the garden, (not omitting to set up the tree-props and brush the caterpillars from the cabbages, like a careful housewife as she is!) then through the vineyard, until she finds him seated under the peartree, in tears. A charming scene takes place between them. Hermann declares his intention of setting off in defence of fatherland; he is eloquent on the duties of citizens to give their blood for their country. But the mother knows very well it is no political enthusiasm thus suddenly moving him to quit his home; she has divined his love for Dorothea, the maiden whom he met among the emigrants; she questions him, and receives his confidence. Yes, it is because he loves Dorothea, and because his father has forbidden him to think of any but a rich bride, that he is about to depart. His father has always been unjust to him. Here interposes the mother; persuades Hermann to make the first advances to his father, certain that the paternal anger is mere hasty words, and that the dearest wish of Hermann's heart will not be disregarded. She brings him back with these hopes.

In the fifth canto the friends are still sipping from green glasses the cool Rhine wine, and arguing the old question. To them enter mother and son. She reminds her husband how often they have looked forward to the day when Hermann should make choice of a bride. That day has arrived. He has chosen the Emigrant maiden. Mine host hears this in ominous

stillness. The Pastor rises, and heartily backs Hermann in his prayer. He looks upon this choice as an inspiration from above, and knows Hermann well enough to trust him in such a choice. The father is still silent. The Apothecary, cautious ever, suggests a middle course. He does not trust implicitly in these inspirations from above. He proposes to inquire into the character of the maiden, and as he is not easily to be deceived, he undertakes to bring back a true report. I need scarcely point out the superiority of this treatment of the old story, wherein the lover first inquires into the character of the maiden, and then makes up his mind to have her. Hermann needs no inquiry—but neither does he shirk it. He urges the Apothecary to set off, and take the Pastor with him, two such experienced men being certain to detect the truth. For himself he is sure of the result. Mine host, finding wife and friends against him, consents, on a worthy report being brought by Pastor and Apothecary, to call Dorothea his daughter. The two commissioners seat themselves in the cart, and Hermann, mounting the box, drives them swiftly to the village. Arriving there, they get out. Hermann describes Dorothea, that they may recognize her; and awaits their return. Very graphic is the picture of this village, where the wanderers are crowded in barns and gardens, the streets blocked up with carts, men noisily attending to the lowing cows and horses, women busily washing and drying on every hedge, while the children dabble in the stream. Through this crowd the two friends wander, and witness a quarrel, which is silenced by an old magistrate, who afterwards gives them satisfactory details about Dorothea. This episode is full of happy touches and thoughtful poetry. The friends return joyful to Hermann, and tell him he may take Dorothea home. But while they have been inquiring about her, he, here on the threshold of his fate, has

been torturing himself with doubts as to whether Dorothea will accept him. She may love another; what is more probable? She may refuse to come with them into a strange house. He begs them to drive home without him. He will alone ask Dorothea, and return on foot with her if she consent. The Pastor takes the reins, but the cautious Apothecary, willing enough to entrust the Pastor with the care of his soul, has misgivings about his power of saving his body. The Pastor reassures him, and they disappear in a cloud of dust, leaving Hermann to gaze after them motionless, fixed in thought.

The next two cantos are exquisitely poetical. As Hermann stands by the spring, he sees Dorothea coming with a water jug in each hand. He approaches her, and she smiles a friendly smile at his approach. He asks why she comes so far from the village to fetch water. She answers that her trouble is well repaid if only because it enables her to see and thank him for the kindness he has shown to the sufferers; but also adds that the improvident men have allowed oxen and horses to walk into the streams, and so disturb all the water of the village. They then pass to the well, and sit upon the wall which protects it. She stoops, and dips a jug in the water; he takes the other jug and dips it also, and they see the image of themselves mirrored in the wavering blue of the reflected heavens, and they nod and greet each other in the friendly mirror. "Let me drink," says the joyous youth. And she holds the jug for him. Then they rest leaning upon the jugs in sweet confidence.

I cannot resist quoting the original of this charming picture:

Also sprach sie, und war die breiten Stufen hinunter,
Mit dem Begleiter gelangt; und auf das Mäuerchen setzten
Beide sich nieder des Quells. Sie beugte sich über, zu schöpfen;
Und er fasste den anderen Krug, und beugte sich über.

Und sie sahen gespiegelt ihr Bild in der Bläue des Himmels
Schwanken, und nickten sich zu, und grüssten sich freundlich im Spiegel.
Lass mich trinken, sagte darauf der heitere Jüngling;
Und sie reicht' ihm den Krug. Dann ruhten sie Beide vertraulich
Auf die Gefässe gelehnt.

She then asks him what has brought him here. He looks into her eyes, and feels happy, but dares not trust himself with the avowal. He endeavours to make her understand it in an indirect recital of the need there is at home for a young and active woman to look after the house and his parents. She thinks he means to ask her to come as servant in his house, and, being alone in the world, gladly consents. When he perceives her mistake he is afraid to undeceive her, and thinks it better to take her home and gain her affection there. "But let us go," she exclaims, "girls are always blamed who stay long at the fountain in gossip." They stand up, and once more look back into the well to see their images meeting in its water, and "sweet desires possess them".

He accompanies her to the village, and witnesses, in the affection all bear to Dorothea, the best sign that his heart has judged aright. She takes leave of them all, and sets forth with Hermann, followed by the blessings and handkerchief-wavings of the emigrants. In silence they walk towards the setting sun, which tinges the storm-clouds threatening in the distance. On the way she asks him to describe the characters of those she is going to serve. He sketches father and mother. "And how am I to treat you, you the only son to my future master?" she asks. By this time they have reached the pear-tree, and the moon is shining overhead. He takes her hand, answering, "Ask your heart, and follow all it tells you." But he can go no further in his declaration, fearing to draw upon himself a refusal. In silence they sit awhile and look upon

the moon. She sees a window—it is Hermann's, who hopes it will soon be her's. They rise to continue their course, her foot slips, she falls into his arms; breast against breast, cheek against cheek, they remain a moment, he not daring to press her to him, merely supporting her. In a few minutes more they enter the house.

The charm of these cantos, as indeed of the whole poem, cannot of course be divined from the analysis I am making; the perfume of a violet is not to be found in the description of the violet. But, with all drawbacks, the analysis enables a reader of imagination to form a better conception of the poem than he would form from an æsthetical discussion such as philosophical criticism indulges in. With this caveat let our analysis proceed. The mother is uneasy at this long absence of Hermann; comes in and out, noting the appearances of the storm, and is rather sharp in her blame of the two friends for leaving him without securing the maiden. The Apothecary narrates how he was taught patience in youth; and, the door opening, presents the young couple to their glad eyes. Hermann introduces her, but tells the Pastor aside that as yet there has been no talk of marriage; she only supposes her place is to be that of servant. The host, wishing to be galant, goes at once to the point, treats her as his daughter, and compliments her on her taste in having chosen his son. She blushes, is pained, and replies with some reproach that for such a greeting she was unprepared. With tears in her eyes she paints her forlorn condition, and the secret escapes her, that, touched by Hermann's generosity and noble bearing, she really has begun to feel the love for him they twit her with; but having made that confession, of course she can no longer stay; and she is departing with grief in her heart when the mistake is cleared up; she is accepted, dowerless, by them all, and

Hermann, in pressing her to his heart, feels prepared for the noble struggle of life.

Such is the story of *Hermann und Dorothea*, which is written in Homeric hexameters, with Homeric simplicity. In the ordinary course of things, I should be called upon to give some verdict on the much-vexed question as to whether, properly speaking, this poem is an Epic or an Idyll, or, by way of compromise, an Idyllic Epic. The critics are copious in distinctions and classifications. They tell us in what consists the Epos proper, which they distinguish from the Romantic Epos, and from the Bourgeois Epos; and then these heavy batteries are brought to bear on *Hermann und Dorothea*. Well! if these discussions gratify the mind, and further any of the purposes of Literature, let those, whose bent lies that way, occupy themselves therewith. To me it seems idle to trouble oneself whether *Hermann und Dorothea* is or is not an Epic, or what kind of Epic it should be called. It is a poem. One cannot say more for it. If it be unlike all other poems, there is no harm in that; if it resemble some other poems, the resemblance does not enhance its charm. Let us accept it for what it is, a poem full of life, character, and beauty; simple in its materials, astonishingly simple in its handling; written in obvious imitation of Homer, and yet preserving throughout the most modern colour and sentiment. Of all idylls, it is the most truly idyllic. Of all poems describing country life and country people, it is the most truthful; and on comparing it with Theocritus or Virgil, with Guarini or Tasso, with Florian or Delille, with Gesner or Thomson, the critic will note with interest its absence of poetic ornamentation, its freedom from all "idealization". Its peasants are not worthy to be fashioned in Dresden China, or to solicit the palette of Lancret and Watteau; but are as true as poetry can represent them. The characters are wonderfully drawn, with a few

decisive unobtrusive touches. Shakspeare himself is not more dramatic in the presentation of character. The Host, his wife, the Pastor, the old cautious Apothecary, stand before us in all their humours. Hermann, the stalwart peasant, frank, simple, and shy, and Dorothea, the healthy, affectionate, robust, simple peasant girl, are ideal characters in the best sense, viz., in the purity of nature. Those "ideal peasants" with Grecian features and irreproachable linen, so loved of bad painters and poor poets, were not at all the figures Goethe cared to draw; he had faith in nature, which would not allow him to idealize. Very noteworthy is it that he, like Walter Scott, could find a real pleasure in talking with the common people, such as astonished his daughter-in-law (from whom, among others, I learned the fact), who could not comprehend what this great intellect found in conversation with an old woman baking her bread, or an old carpenter planing a fir plank. He would talk with his coachman, pointing out to him the peculiarities of the scenery, and delighting in his remarks. Stately and silent as he often was to travelling bores, and to literary men with no ideas beyond the circle of dusty octavos, he was loquacious and interested whenever one of the people came in his way; and the secret of this was his abiding interest in every individuality. A carpenter, who was a carpenter, interested him; but the carpenter in Sunday clothes, aping the bourgeois, would have found him as silent and stately as every other pretender found him. What Scott gathered from his intercourse with the people, everyone knows who has noticed the rich soil of humour on which Scott's antiquarian fancies are planted; what Goethe gathered from the same source may be read in most of his works, especially in *Hermann und Dorothea, Faust,* and *Wilhelm Meister.*

The same objective truth is noticeable in his delineation of

the scenes. They are not rhetorically or metaphorically described, they are presented directly to us. Instead of saying what they are like, he says what they *are*. Instead of imagery he employs objects. Hence it is that while this poem is essentially *popular* (and on its first appearance produced a deep impression on the people, was reprinted on the coarsest paper at the lowest prices, such as only occurs with the people's literature), it is also one of the greatest favourites with highly cultured readers. Between these two classes there is a third class, cultivated indeed, but not sufficiently cultivated, which finds the simplicity of this poem undistinguishable from baldness. Such readers desire imagery, and cannot see the art which dispenses with it; they want more stirring incidents, and characters stalking upon stilts. *Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa!*

As I do not enter upon the discussion of whether the poem is or is not an Epic, I may leave undisturbed all the derivative questions respecting the absence of *similes, episodes,* and *supernatural machinery*—which the critics assure us are indispensable to the Epic—as also the other subsidiary matters of action, time, and space. By so doing the bulk of this chapter is materially diminished, and the reader not materially impoverished. Two points only require notice, and those shall be briefly touched.

First of the subject-matter. Taken from the sad experience of the hour, moving amid scenes made desolate by the French Revolution, it was natural that something of political significance should be sought in this story. Schiller would undoubtedly have made it the vehicle of splendid eloquence on Freedom, such as would have made the pulses beat. But that was nowise Goethe's tendency. He told Meyer that he had endeavoured "in an epic crucible to free from its

dross the pure human existence of a small German town, and at the same time mirror in a small glass the great movements and changes of the world's stage."* While leaving to others the political problem, he confined himself as usual to the purely human and individual interest. Instead of declamations on Freedom, he tried to teach men to be free; and by Freedom he meant the complete healthy development of their own natures, not a change of political institutions. In one of the *Xenien* he says:

> Zur Nation euch zu bilden, ihr hoffet es, Deutsche, vergebens.
> Bildet, ihr könnt es, dafür freier zu Menschen euch aus.†

And in this sense *Hermann und Dorothea* may be accepted as a Hymn to the Family, a solemn vindication of the eternal claims which, as a first necessity, should occupy men.

With regard to the second point, that namely of style, Schiller's cordial praise, in a letter to Meyer, may here find place. "Nor have we in the meantime been inactive, as you know, and least of all our friend, who in the last few years has really surpassed himself. His epic poem you have read; you will admit that it is the pinnacle of his and all our modern art. I have seen it grow up, and have wondered almost as much at the manner of its growth as at the completed work. Whilst the rest of us are obliged painfully to collect and to prune, in order slowly to bring forth anything passable, he has only gently to shake the tree, in order to have fall to him the most beautiful fruit, ripe and heavy. It is incredible with what ease he now reaps for himself the fruits of a well-bestowed life and a persistent culture; how significant and sure all his steps now are; how the clearness as to himself and

* *Briefe an und von Goethe.*

† "Germans, you hope in vain to develope yourselves into a Nation; strive, therefore, to develope yourselves all the more freely into Men."

as to objects, preserves him from every idle effort and beating about. But you have him now yourself, and can satisfy yourself of all this with your own eyes. But you will agree with me in this, that on the summit where he now stands, he ought to think more of bringing the beautiful form he has given himself to outward exhibition, than to go out in search of new material; in short, that he now ought to live entirely for poetic execution."

The Homeric form is admirably adapted to this kind of narrative; and Voss had already made it popular by his *Luise*. Respecting the style of this poem, I would further beg the reader to compare it with that of the last books of *Wilhelm Meister*, composed about the same period, and he will then see Goethe's immense superiority on quitting prose for poetry. None of the faults of his prose are traceable here. The language is as clear as crystal, and as simple; the details are all, without exception, significant; not a line could be lopped away without injury. One feels that the invigorating breezes of Ilmenau, where in a space of six months this poem was mainly composed, have roused the poet out of the flaccid moods of prose, and given him all his quiet strength.

Before finally dismissing the poem, it may amuse the reader to have a specimen of that ingenious criticism which delights in interpreting the most obvious facts into profound meanings. Hegel, in his *Æsthetik*, and after him Rosenkrantz, in his excellent book *Goethe und seine Werke*, call attention to the fact that Goethe is far truer in his *German* colouring than Voss, whose *Luise* gave the impulse to this poem. Not having read the *Luise* I am unable to judge of this superiority; but the example cited by these critics is assuredly amusing. Voss, they tell us, makes his people drink copiously of coffee; but,

however wide-spread the custom of coffee-drinking, we must remember that coffee, and the sugar which sweetens it, are not *German*, they come from Arabia and the West Indies; the very cups in which the coffee is drunk are of Chinese origin, not German. We are miles away from Germany. How different in Goethe! His host of the Golden Lion refreshes guests with a glass of wine; and what wine? Rhine wine; the German wine, *par excellence;* the wine growing on the hill behind his own house! And this Rhine wine, is it not drunk out of green glasses, the genuine German glasses? And upon what do these glasses stand? Upon a tin tray: that is also genuine German!

It would be the merest British prosaism to suggest that in Voss the pastor drinks coffee, because coffee is habitually drunk in the parsonage; while in Goethe, the characters drink wine, because they are in the *Golden Lion*, and Rhine wine, because they are in the Rhine country; yet to such prosaism is the British critic reduced in answering the subtleties of German æsthetics.

CHAPTER V.

THE THEATRICAL MANAGER.

It will be briefer, and help to convey a more accurate notion of Goethe's efforts in the direction of the Theatre, if, instead of scattering through this biography a number of isolated details, recording small events in chronological order, I endeavour to present some general view of Goethe's managerial efforts.

We have already seen how, on his first arrival at Weimar, the Court was passionately fond of theatrical entertainments, and how eagerly he entered into them. The Theatre was a ruin, from the fire of the previous year. Theatres were improvised in the Ettersburg woods, and Tiefurt valley, whereon the gay courtiers "strutted their brief hour" by torchlight, to the accompaniment of horns. Actors were improvised from the Court circle. Plays were improvised, and sometimes written with elaborate care. The public was the public of private theatricals. All this has been narrated in Book IV. What we have here to do with it is to call attention to the contrast thus presented by the Weimar stage with other German stages, and, above all, with the essential conditions of a stage which shall be anything more than the amusement of a dilettanté circle. The drama is essentially a natural out-

growth. In Weimar, instead of growing out of a popular tendency, and appealing to the people, it grew out of the idleness of a court, and appealed to dilettantism. The actors, instead of being recruited from runaway clerks, ambitious apprentices, romantic barbers, and scapegrace students, were princes, noblemen, poets, musicians. Instead of playing to a Public,—that heterogeneous, but in dramatic matters indispensable, jury, whose verdicts are in the main always right—they played to courtiers, whose judgment, even when unfettered, would not have had much value; and it never was unfettered. The consequence may be foreseen. As a Court amusement, the theatre was a pleasant and not profitless recreation; as an influence, it was pernicious. The starting point was false. Not so can dramatic art flourish; not so are Molières and Shakspeares allowed to manifest their strength. The national co-operation is indispensable. Academies may compile Dictionaries, they cannot create Literature; priesthoods may produce libraries, they cannot create Philosophy; and Courts may patronize Theatres, they cannot create a Drama. The reason lies deep in the nature of things. Germany has never had a Drama, because she has never had a Stage which could be, or would be, national. Lessing knew what was needed, but he had not the power to create it. Schiller early mistook the path, and all his noble strivings were frustrated.

Goethe and Schiller, profoundly in earnest, and profoundly convinced of the great influences to be exercised by the stage, endeavoured to create a German Drama which should stand high above the miserable productions then vitiating public taste. They aspired to create an Ideal Drama, in which the loftiest forms of Art should be presented. But they made a false step at the outset. Disgusted with the rude productions of the day, and distrusting the instincts of the public, they

appealed to the cultivated few. Culture was set above Passion and Humour. The stage was to be literary; which is saying, in other words, that it was not to be popular. Nor did experience enlighten them. During the whole period of their reform, the principal performances were of the old style. At first a wandering troupe, with a wandering repertory, performed opera, drama, and farce, as best it could, with more real success than High Art could boast. Even when Schiller had illustrated the stage with his masterpieces, the ever-pressing necessity of *amusing* the public forced the manager to give the vulgar appetite its vulgar food.* The dramatic problem is: How to unite the demands of an audience insisting on amusement, with the demands of Art, looking beyond amusement? There are many writers who can amuse, but who reach no higher aim; and there are writers who have lofty aims, but cannot amuse. In the drama the first class is nearer the mark than the second; but the true dramatist is he who can unite the two. Shakspeare and Molière—to take the greatest examples—are as amusing as they are profound; and they live only because they continue to amuse. *Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth, Tartufe, L'École des Femmes,* and the *Malade Imaginaire,* may be enjoyed by the veriest clown, and by the most cultivated critic. Goethe and Schiller fell into the error which in England, a few years ago, was preached as a gospel by a band of clever writers, who gloried in the title of "Unacted Dramatists"; the error of supposing a magnificent dome could be erected without a vulgar basis; the error of supposing that the Drama could be more successful as Literature, than as the reflection of national life in amusing mirrors.

It was in 1790 that the Weimar Theatre was rebuilt and

* Goethe confesses so much. See *Eckermann*, vol. I, p. 305; Oxenford's translation.

reopened. Goethe undertook the direction with powers more absolute than any director ever had; for he was independent even of success. The Court paid all expenses, and the stage was left free for him to make experiments upon. He made them, and they all failed. He superintended rehearsals with great care. Shakspeare's *King John* and *Henry IV*, his own *Gross Cophta, Bürgergeneral, Clavigo, Die Geschwister*, were produced, but without any great effect; for the actors were mediocre and ill paid, and there was no audience to create actors by enthusiasm and criticism. The audience was chilled by the presence of the Court, and could rarely be emboldened into rapture, which is the life, the pulse, the stimulus of acting. The pit was cowed by the Court, and the Court was cowed by Goethe. His contempt of public opinion was undisguised. "The direction," he wrote to his second in command, "acts according to its own views, and not in the least according to the demands of the public. Once for all, understand that the public must be controlled—*will determinirt seyn.*" To Schiller, who was quite of this opinion, he said: "No one can serve two masters, and of all masters the last that I would select is the public which sits in a German theatre." It is all very well for a poet or a philosopher to scorn the fleeting fashions of the day, and to rely on the verdict of posterity; but the Drama appeals to the public of the day, and while the manager keeps his eye on posterity, the theatre is empty.

Wer machte denn der Mitwelt Spass?

"Who is to amuse the present?" asks the sensible Merry Andrew, in the Theatre-Prologue to *Faust*. A dramatist appealing to posterity is like an orator speaking *not* to convince the audience before him, but the audience of a century to come.

The Weimar audiences might be treated despotically, but they could not be forced into enthusiasm for that which wearied them. They submitted in silence. The riotous gallery and dogged pit of France and England only tolerate the absurdities which delight *them;* they admit no arbiter but their own amusement. An infusion of this rebellious element would have aided Goethe and Schiller in their efforts, by warning them from many a mistake. The Jena students might have supplied this element, had they been more constant visitors, and less controlled. The student is by nature and profession a rebel; and the Jena student had this tendency cultivated into a system. To be a roaring swashbuckler, with profound contempt for all *Philisters,* and a vast capacity for beer, was not enough indeed to constitute a pure judge of art; but to be young, full of life and impulse, and above all to be independent, were primary qualities in a dramatic audience, and these students brought such qualities into the pit. "Without them," says the worthy Klebe in his description of Weimar, "the house would often be empty. They generally come in the afternoon, and ride or drive back after the play." If they enlivened the Theatre, they scandalized the town. Imagination pictures them arriving covered with dust, in garbs of varied and eccentric device, ambitious of appearing as different from "humdrum" citizens as might be: adorned with tower-shaped caps, with motley ornaments of tassel, lace, &c., from under which escape flowing locks quite innocent of comb, which mingle with beard and moustache. Their short jackets are lined with stuffs of different colour. Their legs are cased in riding trousers, the inner sides of which are of leather. In their hands is the famous long whip, which they crack as they pour from the Webicht over the bridge into the town, startling its provincial dulness with an uproar by them called "singing"—a musical

entertainment which they vary by insulting the not imposing soldiers, whom they christen "tree-frogs," on account of the green and yellow uniform. They push to the utmost the licence and pride of the "Renomist," namely, to be ill-mannered.

When these students poured into the theatre, they carried there something like enthusiasm; but they were controlled by one who had a very mediocre admiration of their wild ways—the Geheimrath Goethe. Of him Edward Devrient, in his excellent history of the German stage,* says: "He sat in the centre of the pit; his powerful glance governed and directed the circle around him, and bridled the dissatisfied or neutral. On one occasion, when the Jena students, whose arbitrary judgment was very unseasonable to him, expressed their opinion too tumultuously, he rose, commanded silence, and threatened to have the disturbers turned out by the hussars on guard. A similar scene took place in 1802 on the representation of Fr. Schlegel's *Alarcos*, which appeared to the public too daring an attempt, and the approbation given by the loyal party provoked a loud laugh of opposition. Goethe rose and called out with a voice of thunder: 'Let no one laugh!' At last he went so far as for some time to forbid any audible expression on the part of the public, whether of approval or disapproval. He would suffer no kind of disturbance in what he held to be suitable. Over criticism he kept a tight rein; hearing that Böttticher was writing an essay on his direction of the theatre, he declared that if it appeared he would resign his post; and Böttticher left the article unprinted."

Holding this despotic position towards the public, it may be imagined he was imperious enough with the actors. Both he and Schiller were of opinion that nothing short of the "brief imperative" was of any use with actors—*denn durch Vernunft*

* *Geschichte der deutschen Schauspiel-Kunst.*

und Gefälligkeit ist nichts auszurichten, said Schiller. Goethe as director would hear of no opposition, would listen to none of the egotistical claims which usually torment managers; he insisted on each doing what was allotted to him. Resistance was at once followed by punishment; he sent the men to the guard house, and had sentinels placed before the doors of the women, confining them to their rooms. With the leading actors he employed other means: once when Becker refused to play a small part in *Wallenstein's Lager,* Goethe informed him that if he did not undertake the part, he, Goethe, would play it himself—a threat which at once vanquished Becker, who knew it would be fulfilled.

Nevertheless with all this despotism he was still the great, highminded, loveable Goethe, and was reverenced by the actors who were under him. Chancellor von Müller says that "Nowhere did he more freely exercise the spell of his imposing presence; rigorous and earnest in his demands, unalterable in his determinations, prompt and delighted to acknowledge every successful attempt, attentive to the smallest as to the greatest, and calling forth in everyone his most hidden powers—in a narrow circle, and often with slender means, he accomplished what appeared incredible; his encouraging glance was a rich reward; his kind word an invaluable gift. Everyone felt himself greater and more powerful in the place which he had assigned to him, and the stamp of his approbation seemed to be a sort of consecration for life. No one who has not seen and heard with what pious fidelity the veterans of that time of Goethe's and Schiller's cheerful spirited cooperation, treasured every recollection of these their heroes; with what transport they dwelt on every detail of their proceedings; and how the mere mention of their names called forth the flash of youthful pleasure from their eyes;—can have an idea of the affectionate

attachment and enthusiastic veneration those great men inspired."

It appears from Edward Devrient's account that the actors were miserably paid. Even the Jägemann—the Duke's mistress—who was prima donna as well as leading actress, received only six hundred thalers a year, with a retiring pension of three hundred; and six hundred thalers is about one hundred pounds sterling. Moreover, the actors were not allowed a *congé*, as at other theatres; so that no money could be made by them beyond their salaries. Except to confessed mediocrity, Weimar could scarcely have offered a temptation; nevertheless, the magic names of Goethe and Schiller did attract a few good actors.

The shifts to which the management was forced to have recourse, with so small and insufficient a troupe, may be gathered from this anecdote. The opera of *Die Zauberflöte* was performed, but the Queen of Night was so ostentatious of her "love for her lord" that it was impossible to let her appear in that condition. Another singer was not to be had. In this dilemma Goethe actually made her sing the music behind the scenes, while an actress on the stage pantomimically represented the character.

When the connection between Schiller and Goethe grew closer, the Theatre began to assume a really earnest aspect. With his natural tendency to interest himself in whatever deeply interested his friends, Goethe caught some of Schiller's dramatic enthusiasm, and began to treat the stage as a means of artistic education for the nation. *Don Carlos* was performed; somewhat later *Egmont* was adapted to the stage by Schiller (in a melodramatic style which revealed his love of material "effects"), and the greatest undertaking of all was commenced, namely, the performance of *Wallenstein*. The

effect was prodigious, and the Weimar stage seemed really to have achieved something like the establishment of a new and grandiose style of dramatic representation. It was, however, but a flash. The strivings of the two poets were misdirected, as the event soon proved. No drama could so be founded. The dramatic age had passed, and could not be restored—not at least in such forms.

"The Weimar School," says Devrient,* who is here speaking *ex professo*, and is worth attending to, "although it demanded of the artist 'to produce something resembling nature,'† nevertheless set up a new standard of nobleness and beauty, by which every phenomenon in the region of art was to be tested. The tendency hitherto dominant had by no means neglected the beautiful, but it had sought only a *beautiful reality*,—now, with subtle distinction, *beautiful truth* was demanded from it. Hitherto *living nature* had served as the standard, now an *enlightened taste* was to be the rule. The actors were to disaccustom themselves to the native German manner, and find a freer, a more universal conception; they were to raise themselves out of the narrow limits of the special, of the individual, to the contemplation of the general, of the Ideal.

"These were astoundingly new and hard demands on the actor. Hitherto a plain understanding, with vivid and sensitive feelings, had tolerably well sufficed to make this natural talent tell; for the problems lay within the actor's circle of vision. Now, appeal was principally made to his taste; he was required to have a refined instinct, and ennobled sentiments, which, to a certain degree, presupposed scientific and antiquarian culture; for instead of *nature*, as hitherto, the antique was now the model of speech and feature. The actual culture of the

* *Geschichte der deutschen Schauspiel Kunst*, p. 255.

† *Goethe's Vorrede zu den Propyläen.*

histrionic class was not in the remotest degree adequate to these demands; what then was to be done? The Weimar School must content itself with *training;* it must seek to supply by external drilling what ought properly to have proceeded from a higher intellectual life, from an intrinsically ennobled nature. Nothing else remained to it. The spirit of our literature was pressing forward with unexampled power to that summit on which it could from thenceforth measure itself with that of all other nations; it carried along with it theatrical art, such as it was. If the attempt had been made to advance the culture of actors as far as was necessary in order to bring it even with the victorious march of our literature, the moment would have been lost in which the stage could render immeasurable service to the national culture.

"Goethe and Schiller had essentially this mission: to elevate poetry; to carry the intellectual life of the nation into higher ideal regions; literature was their *immediate* object, the stage only a secondary one; nay, it was with them only a means to an end. To work with entire devotion to dramatic art, solely for it and through it, as Molière and Shakspeare did, never occurred to them; nor would they imitate Lessing, who attached himself closely to art, to what it achieved, and could achieve. They placed themselves and their poems on the stand-point of the independent *literary* drama. The old schism between the *genres* again presented itself; the scholarly in opposition to the popular drama; and poetic art again won the supremacy over dramatic. *Don Carlos* and *Wallenstein* were not conceived for the actual stage, and could only be adapted to it with great labour and sacrifice; in writing *Faust, Tasso,* and the *Natürliche Tochter,* Goethe did not contemplate their representation, which must be considered purely as a theatrical experiment. It was a natural consequence that,

since the two great poets adapted their works to the theatre just as it was, and were by no means excessively fastidious in their mode of doing it, they, with the same sort of violence, pushed forward the art of representation, and here also had to content themselves with what could be achieved by merely external discipline. Dramatic art had not reached that point of culture which could prepare it perfectly to comprehend and master their poems, and reproduce them independently. * * * * Now if this new school was to make its authority in taste acknowledged, that authority must necessarily be exercised with a certain despotism. With despotism towards the actors and the public, since both were deeply imbued with naturalism. Like the unfortunate Neuber, like Schroeder in his eightieth year, Schiller and Goethe placed themselves in decided opposition to the taste of the majority. They maintained a thoroughly aristocratic position with respect to the public, and defended the ideal principle with all the power of their pre-eminent genius; nay, they did not scorn to attack the prevalent taste with the sharpest weapons of satire. Their correspondence exhibits their contempt for the masses, and for the champions of the popular taste, in all that rudeness which seems inseparable from the enthusiasm of great souls for a more exalted humanity. Nowhere did they sue for the approbation of the multitude; nowhere did they accommodate themselves to the ruling taste, or even flatter it.

"The despotic energy with which Goethe carried out the ideal principle, in spite of all difficulties, necessarily made itself felt in his direction of the theatre. He had to urge forward dramatic art, and to wring from the public a formal respect for the experiments of his school; a double task, which obliged him to surpass even Schroeder in the peremptoriness of his commands.

"How great the difficulty which was here to be overcome, can scarcely be appreciated in the present day, when every variety of verse is current on the most insignificant stage. The language of poetry was lost; the attempt to restore the Alexandrines had everywhere failed; rhythmic feeling, which the higher development of the opera had certainly extended among artists, was not yet understood, not yet applied to language. That even Mannheim, where attempts had most frequently been made with iambic verse, had remained far from clear as to its principle, was proved by Iffland's very defective treatise on this verse. Schroeder, in the representation of *Don Carlos* at Hamburg, true to his system, had laid no weight on the rhetorical side. Thus there existed difficulties similar to those which at the end of the seventeenth century hindered the spread of the Alexandrine verse and the influence of the Silesian school of poets on literature. It was fortunate, therefore, that the poets who introduced the new metrical language were consummate masters in its use, and that they had opportunity and power enough to solve the problem practically. When this had once been done, imitation might be calculated upon, and the influential mediator, Iffland, offered himself readily for that purpose. But immediately another problem urged itself, namely, how to treat correctly the doggerel rhymes in *Wallenstein's Lager*. The great poets feared the danger which lay for the reciter in the irregularity of the rhyme—in the temptation to fall too perceptibly on the rhyme; but, remarkably enough, this point was soon settled. It was as if the mediæval popular verse lay in the German blood; it only required a summons to call it forth again naturally and flowingly as in the time of Hans Sachs and Jacob Ayrer. * * * The system of direction which was introduced by Schroeder, and in which the highest value was attached to reading-rehearsals as

the basis of all artistic execution, was adopted by Goethe; in this case, in which the rhetorical part of the representation was so new and so surpassingly important, these rehearsals must not only be multiplied but converted into formal exercises in reading. And so difficult was it to give rhythm its due, that Goethe, in the zeal of demonstration, went so far as to seize the arm of a principal and popular actress, and to move it backwards and forwards in iambic measure, so as to make the rhythm intelligible by the accompaniment of a resentfully accentuated *sch.* The solution of the new problem involved hard trials of patience on all sides, and many a custom which had become prevalent under the old system was a hindrance to the work. Thus, Goethe writes to Schiller, after a reading-rehearsal: 'Mlle. Teller read the Duchess yesterday so far well that she did not read falsely, but too feebly and too much in rehearsal fashion. She assures me that all will be different on the stage. As this is a universal whim with actors, I cannot blame her in particular for it, though this folly is the principal cause that no important part is properly learned, and that at last so much depends on chance.'"

Not only were there difficulties of rhythm, but also of pronunciation to be overcome. The German language, harsh as it is at the best, becomes hideous in the careless licences of pronunciation which various cities and classes adopt—as people who are too ugly to hope for any admiration of their persons, come at last entirely to neglect their appearance. The Suabians, Austrians, and especially the Weimarians, plagued Goethe terribly with their snorting of that "language of horses", as Charles V called it. "One would scarcely believe that *b*, *p*, *d*, and *t*, are generally considered to be *four* different letters," said the poet to Eckermann, "for they only

speak of a hard and a soft *b*, and of a hard and a soft *d*, and thus seem tacitly to intimate that *p* and *t* do not exist.* With such people *Pein* (pain) sounds like *Bein* (leg), *Pass* (pass) like *Bass* (bass), and *Teckel* (a terrier) like *Deckel* (cover)." Thus an actor in an impassioned moment bidding his mistress cease her reproaches, exclaimed *O ente* (Oh, duck !) meaning *O ende* (Oh, cease !)

The success of *Wallenstein*, which was a theatrical no less than an artistic success, seemed to have decided the battle in favour of the Ideal school; seemed, but did not. Art was henceforth to be everything. So far did Goethe carry out his principle of placing Art foremost, that he would not suffer the actors to "forget the audience"; his maxim was, that in a scene between two actors, the presence of the spectator should constantly be felt. Consequently the actors were not allowed to stand in profile, or to turn their backs upon the audience, or to speak at the back of the stage, under any pretext. They were to *recite*, not to *be* the characters represented. In acting, he reversed his old artistic maxim, and insisted on Beauty first, Truth afterwards: *erst schön dann wahr.*†

It will surprise no one that this *Kunst* tendency, this preoccupation with the Ideal, should result in the rehabilitation of the most perfect form of drama which that tendency has produced—I mean the French Tragedy, so pitilessly ridiculed by Lessing. Nay, Goethe himself translated Voltaire's *Mahomet*, which was played in 1800, and afterwards *Tancred*. The *Adelphi* of Terence, translated by Einsiedel; the *Ion* of Schle-

* Ludecus in his *Aus Goethe's Leben: Wahrheit und keine Dichtung*, tells a story of Graf, Schiller's favorite actor, who on seeing the great Talma exclaimed, "*Dalma ist ein Gott !*"

† Remnants of the old Weimar school still talk of these days, and the drilling which was necessary to give the actors. From one, to whom Goethe was very kind, I heard full confirmation of what is said in the text.

gel; the *Phœdra* of Euripides, translated by Schiller; and finally Schiller's own *Braut von Messina,* sufficiently show the wide departure from anything like a modern national drama into which the Weimar school had wandered. To crown this misconception, Terence's comedy was actually represented by actors in Roman Masks,—thus entirely getting rid of the Expression which forms the basis of modern acting. So deplorable a mistake needs only to be mentioned to be appreciated. One step alone remained for dilettantism; and that step was to give the actors the cothurnus, and make them spout Latin and Greek.

During these antique restorations, experiments were made with Shakspeare, Calderon, Gozzi—with everything but the life of the people—and Weimar was proclaimed a great school of Art, in which the *literary* public religiously believed. But the other public? Goethe himself shall answer. "Here in Weimar they have done me the honour to perform my *Iphigenia* and my *Tasso,*" he said to Eckermann in his old age. "But how often? Scarcely once in three or four years. The public finds them tedious. Very probably.... I really had the notion once that it was possible to found a German Drama; but there was no emotion or excitement—all remained as it was before."

To found a German drama by means of poetic works, and antique restorations, was the delusion of one who was essentially *not* a dramatist. I have more than once denied to Goethe the peculiar genius which makes the dramatist; and my denial is not only supported by the evidence of his own works, it is, I think, conclusively established by the version he made of Shakspeare's *Romeo and Juliet,* of which he was not a little proud. The subject is of sufficient literary interest—considering the two names implicated—to warrant a digres-

sion; and the following analysis will not only serve to bring out Goethe's views of dramatic art, better than any work of his own; it will also show the hopelessness there was of any reform coming out of such views.

It was in 1811 that he undertook to recast *Romeo and Juliet* for the stage; and as this version has recently been recovered, and printed by Boas,* we can examine it at leisure. There is scarcely any Shakspearian play which a great poet and dramatist might so reasonably undertake to recast as *Romeo and Juliet;* for while it is instinct with life, character, and dramatic movement, it is in some respects among the worst written of Shakspeare's fine plays. Juvenility of style is apparent in almost every scene. The frequence of rhyme, the forced rhetoric and conceits, the lame expression, and the absence of that passionate and profound poetry which illuminates the great plays, prove it to be an early work. In most of the great situations we find long tirades of rhetorical *concetti* in place of the nervous language, strongly coloured by passion, which Shakspeare afterwards knew so well how to employ. Thus when Juliet is in an agony of suspense as to whether Romeo is dead, she says:

> This torture should be roared in dismal hell.
> Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but *I*,
> And that bare vowel, *I*, shall poison more
> Than the death-darting *eye* of cockatrice:
> I am not I, if there be such an *I*.

There are critics who will defend this (what will they not defend in Shakspeare?) and find plausible arguments to show that it is true passion; but I do not advise any modern poet to write thus, if he would win the admiration of these critics.

* *Nachträge zu Goethe's Werken.*

Passages like the following are frequent. Old Capulet, seeing his daughter distracted with grief, says:

> When the sun sets the earth doth drizzle dew,
> But for the sunset of my brother's son
> It rains downright.
> How now! a conduit girl? what! still in tears?
> Evermore showering? In one little body
> Thou counterfeit'st a bark, a sea, a wind:
> For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,
> Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is,
> Sailing in this salt flood; the winds thy sighs,
> Who, raging with thy tears and they with them,
> Without a sudden calm, will overset
> Thy tempest-tossed body!

As far as I can form any judgment, this is the writing of a boy; and there is abundance of the same kind throughout the play.

It will not be supposed, however, that I am dead to the marvellous beauty of this work, which is an universal favorite, because of its preeminent qualities. It is the work of Shakspeare *young*, but indisputably Shakspeare. He has not only presented the story with wonderful vividness and variety, but he has crowded it with *characters*, and animated those characters with true dramatic motives. Think of Old Capulet, Tybalt, the Nurse, Peter, Gregory and Sampson, and the Apothecary,—all episodical figures, yet each having his well-marked individuality! By touches brief yet free and masterly the figures stand out from the canvas. It is unnecessary to do more than name the principal figures, Romeo and Juliet, Mercutio and Friar Lawrence.

One would imagine that a dramatist who undertook to remedy the defects of this work, would throw all his labour into those parts where the work is weakest, and thus free the

rich harvest of dramatic thought from all the chaff and stubble; one would certainly never expect him to remove any of those vivid touches which give life to the characters, or any of those dramatic presentations of the subject which animate the scene. Yet this, and this only, has Goethe done.*

Shakspeare opens with one of his life-like expositions, pregnant with purpose, and arresting attention at the outset. The Capulet servants are swaggering in the streets of Verona, and no sooner do they meet the servants of the Montagues than at once they come to blows. Tybalt and Benvolio quickly join the fray; old Capulet and old Montague are not long behind. The whole feud of the two houses—that which forms the *nodus* of the piece—lives before us. The entrance of the Prince, threatening death to the man who next disturbs the peace of Verona, introduces another tragic motive. The whole exposition is a masterly specimen of dramatic art. But Goethe had so little sense of what was dramatic that he actually strikes out this exposition, and opens his version like a comic opera, with a chorus of servants who are arranging lamps and garlands before Capulet's house:

Zündet die Lampen an
Windet auch Kränze d'ran
Hell sey das Haus!
&c. &c.

Maskers pass into the house. Romeo and Benvolio enter and *talk*. They *tell* the audience of that family feud which Shakspeare made us *see*. Rosalind is alluded to by Romeo, but all the fantastic hyperbole of desire which Shakspeare's Romeo

* In a letter to Frau von Wolzogen, he speaks of his recently completed version thus: "The maxim which I followed, was to concentrate all that was most interesting, and bring it into harmony; for Shakspeare following the bent of his genius, his time, and his public, was forced to bring together much that was not harmonious to flatter the reigning taste." *Literarischer Nachlass der Frau von Wolzogen*, vol. I, p. 437.

expresses (in direct contrast with the expression of his *passion* for Juliet), is struck out. The two enter Capulet's house, where Benvolio promises to show him a lovelier face than Rosalind's. Before they enter, however, Mercutio arrives; and at this point the student of Shakspeare will uplift his eyebrows when he sees how Goethe has contrived to destroy this poetic creation. Not only is the celebrated Mab speech omitted, but Mercutio declares he will keep out of the ball-room, lest he should be discovered—by his handsome figure! The whole of this must be translated, or my readers may withhold their credence.

Romeo. Come with us.
Get you a mantle, get a stranger's mask.
Mercutio. In vain I don the mask, it helps me not.
I'm known by every child, and must be known.

I am a distinguished man; there is a character in my figure and voice, in my walk, in my every movement.

Benvolio. Truly! thy paunch has a charming look.

Mercutio. It is easy for you to talk—toothpicks, beanstalks as you are! You hang rag after rag upon you: who will unpack you? But I with the heaviest mantle, with the most outrageous nose, I have only to appear, and some one directly whispers behind, "There goes Mercutio! By my faith, it is Mercutio!" That indeed would not be immensely vexatious were it no glory. And since I am Mercutio, let me be Mercutio, and always Mercutio! Now, good bye to you. Do your business as well as you can, I seek my adventures on my pillow. An airy dream shall delight me, while you run after your dreams, and can no more catch them than I can.

I shall be brisk when o'er you weeps the dawn,
While you for weariness, or love, will yawn. [*Exit.*

Into *this* has Mercutio been metamorphosed! The ball scene follows. The nurse, indeed, is introduced, but all her individuality is destroyed; every one of the characteristic touches is washed out by an unsparing sponge. The alterations in this scene are not important, and are chiefly the presence of the

Prince, who comes to the ball with Mercutio, his object being to mix in the society of Capulet and Montague, and so bring about amity between the houses. The old feud is again *talked* of: as if talking could take the place of doing! The rest of the piece follows the original pretty closely; there are only two alterations which call for notice; one an improvement, and one an extraordinary and inexplicable blunder.

To begin with the blunder: The reader knows with what sharpness Shakspeare has contrasted the calm respectable Paris, who woos Juliet through her parents, and the fervid Romeo, who goes direct to Juliet herself; one seeks the father's consent, without troubling himself about the maid; the other seeks the maid's consent, and braves the enmity of the father. What will the reader think of Goethe's dramatic perception, on hearing that this contrast is entirely effaced: Paris makes love to Juliet; has long adored her in silence, before he ventured to ask her parent's consent!

The second alteration is a dramatic improvement; although it will certainly make the Shakspeare bigots cry out. It is the closing of the piece with Juliet's death, the Friar in a short soliloquy pointing the moral. Nothing can be more undramatic or more tiresome than the long recapitulation of facts perfectly familiar to the audience, with which Shakspeare ends the piece.

This *Romeo and Juliet* was not only produced at Weimar, but it kept the stage in Berlin until within the last few years! The Berlin critics on its original production were by no means favourably inclined to it—the dénouement, we learn from Zelter, especially displeased them. They resented being robbed of their *ennui*.

To return to Weimar and its Dramatic School. Enough has been said to characterize the attempt of Goethe and Schiller to

create a German Drama, which attempt, although its failure was inevitable, cannot be regarded without sympathy for the noble aim animating it. That aim was misdirected; but it was the noble error of lofty minds, who saw *above* the exigencies of the age. They could not bring themselves to believe that the Drama, which they held to be so grand a form of Art, had ceased to be the lay-pulpit, and had become a mere amusement.

With Schiller's death Goethe's active interest in the theatre ceased. The Obermarschall Graf von Edeling was adjoined to him, as acting superintendent, but without absolute power, which still remained in Goethe's hands. This was towards the end of 1813. And in 1817 his son, August von Goethe, was added to the direction. Thus was the theatre burdened with a Geheimrath, absolute but inactive, an Obermarschall, and a court page. Nor were matters better behind the scenes. An intrigue had long been forming under the direction of the Jägemann to force Goethe's resignation. Between the Duke's mistress and the Duke's friend there had never been a very pleasant feeling. She was naturally jealous of Goethe's power. As an actress under his direction, she must have had endless little causes of complaint. Had the poet been less firmly fixed in the Duke's affections and interests, this rivalry could not have endured so long. At last an occasion came.

There was at that period, 1817, a comedian named Karsten, whose poodle performed the "leading part" in the well-known melodrame of *The Dog of Montargis* with such perfection that he carried the public everywhere with him, in Paris as in Germany. It may be imagined with what sorrowing scorn Goethe heard of this. The dramatic art to give place to a poodle! He, who detested dogs, to hear of a dog performing on all the stages of Germany with greater success than the

best of actors! The occasion was not one to be lost. The Duke, whose fondness for dogs was as marked as Goethe's aversion to them, was craftily assailed, from various sides, to invite Karsten and his poodle to Weimar. When Goethe heard of this, he haughtily answered, "In our Theatre regulations stands: *No dogs admitted on the stage*"—and paid no more attention to it. As the Duke had already written to invite Karsten and his dog, Goethe's opposition was set down to systematic arbitrariness, and people artfully "wondered" how a prince's wishes could be opposed for such trifles. The dog came. After the first rehearsal, Goethe declared he would have nothing more to do with a theatre on which a dog was allowed to perform; and at once started for Jena. Princes ill brook opposition; and the Duke, after all, was a Duke. In an unworthy moment, he wrote the following, which was posted in the theatre, and forwarded to Goethe:

"From the expressed opinions which have reached me, I have come to the conviction that the Herr Geheimrath von Goethe wishes to be released from his functions as Intendant, which I hereby accord. KARL AUGUST."

A more offensive dismissal could scarcely have been suggested by malice. In the Duke it was only a spurt of the imperious temper and coarseness which roughened his fine qualities. On Goethe the blow fell heavily. "Karl August never understood me," he exclaimed with a deep sigh. Such an insult to the greatest man of his age, coming from his old friend and brother in arms, who had been more friend than monarch to him during two-and-forty years, and who had declared that one grave should hold their bodies—and all about a dog, behind which was a miserable Greenroom cabal! The thought of leaving Weimar for ever, and of accepting the magnificent offers made him from Vienna, pressed urgently on his mind.

But, to his credit be it said, the Duke quickly became sensible of his unworthy outbreak of temper, and wrote to Goethe in a tone of conciliation. The cloud passed over; but no entreaty could make Goethe resume the direction of the theatre. He could pardon the hasty act and unconsidered word of his friend; but he was prouder than the Duke, and held firmly to his resolution of having nothing to do with a theatre which had once prostituted itself to the exhibition of a clever poodle.

What a sarcasm, and in the sarcasm what a moral, lies in this story. Art, which Weimar will not have, gives place to a poodle!

CHAPTER VI.

SCHILLER'S LAST YEARS.

THE current of narrative in the preceding chapter has flowed onwards into years and events from which we must now return. Instead of the year 1817, we must recal the year 1800. Schiller has just come to settle at Weimar, there to end his days in noble work with his great friend. It may interest the reader to have a glimpse of Goethe's daily routine; the more so, as such a glimpse is not to be had from any published works.

He rose at seven, sometimes earlier, after a sound and prolonged sleep; for, like Thorwaldsen, he had a "talent for sleeping" only surpassed by his talent for continuous work. Till eleven he worked without interruption. A cup of chocolate was then brought, and he resumed work till one. At two he dined. This meal was the important meal of the day. His appetite was immense. Even on the days when he complained of not being hungry, he ate much more than most men. Puddings, sweets, and cakes were always welcome. He sat a long while over his wine, chatting gaily to some friend or other (for he never dined alone), or to one of the actors, whom he often had with him, after dinner, to read over their parts,

and to take his instructions. He was fond of wine, and drank daily his two or three bottles.

Lest this statement should convey a false impression, I hasten to recal to the reader's recollection the very different habits of our fathers in respect of drinking. It was no unusual thing to be a "three bottle man" in those days in England, when the three bottles were of Port or Burgundy; and Goethe, a Rhinelander, accustomed from boyhood to wine, drank a wine which his English contemporaries would have called water. The amount he drank never did more than exhilarate him; never made him unfit for work or for society.

Over his wine, then, he sat some hours: no such thing as dessert was seen upon his table in those days: not even the customary coffee after dinner. His mode of living was extremely simple; and even when persons of very modest circumstances burned wax, two poor tallow candles were all that could be seen in his rooms. In the evening he went often to the theatre, and there his customary glass of punch was brought at six o'clock. If not at the theatre, he received friends at home. Between eight and nine a frugal supper was laid, but he never took anything except a little salad or preserves. By ten o'clock he was usually in bed.

Many visitors came to him. It was the pleasure and the penalty of his fame, that all persons who came near Weimar made an effort to see him. Sometimes these visitors were persons of great interest; oftener they were fatiguing bores, or men with pretensions more offensive than dulness. To those he liked, he was inexpressibly charming; to the others he was stately, even to stiffness. While, therefore, we hear some speak of him with an enthusiasm such as genius alone can excite; we hear others giving vent to the feelings of disap-

pointment, and even of offence, created by his manners. The stately minister exasperated those who went to see the impassioned poet. As these visitors were frequently authors, it was natural they should avenge their wounded self-love in criticisms and epigrams. To cite but one example among many: Bürger, whom Goethe had assisted in a pecuniary way, came to Weimar, and announced himself in this preposterous style: "You are Goethe—I am Bürger," evidently believing he was thereby maintaining his own greatness, and offering a brotherly alliance. Goethe received him with the most diplomatic politeness, and the most diplomatic formality; instead of plunging into discussions of poetry, he would be brought to talk of nothing but the condition of the Göttingen University, and the number of its students. Bürger went away furious, and avenged this reception in an epigram, and related to all comers the experience he had had of the proud, cold, diplomatic Geheimrath. Others had the like experience to recount; and a public, ever greedy of scandal, ever willing to believe a great man is a small man, echoed these voices in swelling chorus. Something of this offence lay in the very nature of Goethe's bearing, which was stiff even to haughtiness. His appearance was so imposing, that Heine relates, on the occasion of his first interview with him, how an elaborately prepared speech was entirely driven from his memory by the Jupiter-like presence, and he could only stammer forth "a remark on the excellence of the plums which grew on the road from Jena to Weimar". An imposing presence is irritating to mean natures; and Goethe might have gained universal applause, if he had worn no cravat, and let his hair hang loose upon his shoulders, like Jean Paul.

The mention of Jean Paul leads me to quote *his* impression

of Goethe. "I went timidly to meet him. Every one had described him as cold to everything upon earth. Frau von Kalb said he no longer admires anything, not even himself. Every word is ice. Nothing but curiosities warm the fibres of his heart; so I asked Knebel if he could petrify me, or encrust me in some mineral spring that I might present myself as a statue or a fossil." How one hears the accents of village gossip in these sentences! To Weimarian ignorance Goethe's enthusiasm for statues and natural products seemed monstrous. "His house," Jean Paul continues, "or rather his palace, pleased me; it is the only one in Weimar in the Italian style; with such a staircase! A Pantheon full of pictures and statues. Fresh anxiety oppressed me. At last the god entered, cold, monosyllabic. 'The French are drawing towards Paris,' said Knebel. 'Hm!' said the god. His face is massive and animated; his eye a ball of light! At last, as conversation turned to art, he warmed, and was himself. His conversation is not so rich and flowing as Herder's, but penetrating, acute, and calm. Finally, he read, or rather performed, an unpublished poem, in which the flames of his heart burst through the external crust of ice; so that he greeted my enthusiasm with a pressure of the hand. He did it again as I took leave, and urged me to call. By heaven! we shall love each other! He considers his poetic career closed. There is nothing comparable to his reading. It is like deep-toned thunder, blended with whispering rain-drops."

Now let us hear what Jean Paul says of Schiller. "I went yesterday to see the stony Schiller, from whom all strangers spring back as from a precipice. His form is wasted, yet severely powerful, and very angular. He is full of acumen, but without love. His conversation is as excellent as his writings." He never repeated this visit to Schiller, who doubtless quite

subscribed to what Goethe wrote. "I am glad you have seen Richter. His love of truth, and his wish for self-improvement, have prepossessed me in his favour; but the social man is a sort of theoretical man, and I doubt if he will approach us in a practical way."

If to pretenders and to *strangers* Goethe was cold and repellent, he was warm and attractive enough to all with whom he could sympathize. Brotherly to Schiller and Herder, he was fatherly in his loving discernment and protection to such men as Hegel, then an unknown teacher, and Voss, the son of the translator of Homer.* He excited passionate attachments in all who lived in his intimacy; and passionate hatred in many whom he would not admit to intimacy.

The opening of this century found Schiller active, and anxious to stimulate the activity of his friend. But theories hampered the genius of Goethe; and various occupations disturbed it. He was not like Schiller a reflective, critical poet, but a spontaneous, instinctive poet. The consequence was, that Reflection not only retarded him, it misled him into Symbolism—the dark corner of that otherwise sunny palace of Art which he has reared. He took up *Faust*, and wrote the classic intermezzo of *Helena*. He was very busy with the theatre, and with science; and at the close of the year fell into a dangerous illness, which created much anxiety in the Duke and the Weimar circle, and of which the Frau von Stein wrote in that letter quoted p. 97. He recovered in a few weeks, and busied himself with the translation of *Theophrastus on Colours*, with *Faust*, and the *Natürliche Tochter*.

While the two chiefs of Literature were thus in noble emulation and brotherly love, working together, each anxious for

* See Voss's enthusiastic gratitude in his *Mittheilungen über Goethe und Schiller*.

the success of the other, the nation divided itself into two parties, disputing which was the greater poet of the two; as in Rome the artists dispute about Raphael and Michael Angelo. "It is difficult to appreciate one such genius," says Goethe of the two painters, "still more difficult to appreciate both. Hence people lighten the task by partizanship." The partizanship in the present case was fierce, and has continued. Instead of following Goethe's advice, and rejoicing that it had two such poets to boast of, the public has gone on crying up one at the expense of the other. Schiller himself with charming modesty confessed his inferiority; and in one of his letters to Körner he says: "Compared with Goethe I am but a poetical bungler—*gegen Goethe bin und bleib' ich ein poetischer Lump.*" But the majority have placed him higher than his rival, at least higher in their hearts. Gervinus has remarked a curious contradiction in the fate of their works. Schiller, who wrote for men, is the favourite of women and youths; Goethe, who remained in perpetual youth, is only relished by men. The secret of this is, that Schiller had those passions and enthusiasms which Goethe wanted. Goethe told Eckermann that his works never could be popular; and, except the minor poems and *Faust*, there are none of his productions which equal the popularity of Schiller's.

To make an instrument of vengeance out of this partizanship, seemed an excellent idea to Kotzebue, who, crowned at Berlin, and saluted all over Germany with tributes of tears, now came to his native city of Weimar. He was invited to court, but he was not admitted into the select Goethe-Schiller circle; which irritated his vanity the more, because a joke of Goethe's had been repeated to him. In Japan, besides the temporal court of the emperor, there is the spiritual court of the Dalai-Lama, which exercises a superior though secret in-

fluence. Goethe alluding to this, said: "It is of no use to Kotzebue that he has been received at the temporal court of Japan, if he cannot get admitted to the spiritual court." Kotzebue thought he could destroy that court, and set up one of his own, of which Schiller should be the Dalai-Lama.

There was at this time a select little circle, composed of Goethe, Schiller, Meyer, and several distinguished women, the Countess von Einsiedel, Fräulein von Imhoff, Frau von Wolzogen, and others. The great preponderance of women in this circle gave a romantic tinge to the laws they imposed on themselves. On Kotzebue's arrival, one of Amalia's maids of honour used her utmost to obtain his admission; but Schiller and Goethe, resolved on his exclusion, got a bye-law enacted, that "no member should have the power of introducing another person, native or stranger, without the previously expressed unanimous consent of the other members". A certain coolness had sprung up between some of the members of the circle, and Goethe, pestered by the iteration of the request that Kotzebue should be admitted, at last said, "Laws once recognized should be upheld; if not, it would be better to break up the society altogether; which, perhaps, would be the more advisable, as constancy is always difficult, if not tedious, to ladies." The ladies were naturally enough irritated. Kotzebue was ready to inflame them. Schiller had just gone to Leipzig; and Kotzebue, taking advantage of this absence, organized a fête to celebrate the coronation of Frederick Schiller in the Stadthouse of Weimar. Scenes from *Don Carlos*, the *Maid of Orleans*, and *Maria Stuart*, were to come first. Goethe's favourite, the Countess von Einsiedel (now his foe), was to represent the Joan of Arc; the Fräulein von Imhoff the Queen of Scots; Sophie Moreau was to recite the Song of the Bell. Kotzebue was to appear as Father Thibaut in the *Maid of*

Orleans and as the Bell Founder, in which latter character he was to strike the mould of the bell (made of pasteboard), and breaking it to pieces, disclose the bust of Schiller, which was to be crowned by the ladies. The preparations for this fête were eagerly carried forward. Weimar was in a state of excitement. The cabal looked prosperous. The Princess Caroline had consented to be present. Schiller was most pressingly invited, but said, in Goethe's house, a few days before, "I shall send word I am ill". To this Goethe made no reply. He heard of all the arrangements in perfect silence.

"It was thought," says Falk, to whom we owe this story, "that a coolness between the two great men would spring out of this cabal; especially if the simple, unsuspecting Schiller should fall into the toils laid for him. But they who suspected this, knew not the men. Fortunately, however, the whole scheme fell to pieces. The directors of the Library refused to lend Schiller's bust; the Burgomaster refused to lend the Stadthouse. "Rarely has so melancholy, so disastrous a day risen on the gay world of Weimar. To see the fairest, most brilliant hopes thus crushed at a blow when so near their fulfilment, what was it but to be wrecked in sight of port? Let the reader but imagine the now utterly useless expenditure of crape, gauze, ribbons, lace, beads, flowers which the fair creatures had made; not to mention the pasteboard for the bell, the canvas, colours, brushes for the scenes, the wax candles for lighting, &c. Let him think of the still greater outlay of time and trouble requisite for the learning so many and such various parts; let him figure to himself a majestic Maid of Orleans, a captivating Queen of Scots, a lovely Agnes, so suddenly compelled to descend from the pinnacle of glory, and in evil moment to lay aside the crown and sceptre, helm, dress and ornament, and he will admit there never was fate more cruel."

Shortly after this—on the 13th of June, 1802—Goethe's son was confirmed. Herder officiated on the occasion; and this brought him once more into that friendly relation with Goethe, which of late had been cooled by his jealousy of Schiller. Herder had been jealous of the growing friendship of Goethe and Merck; he was still more embittered by the growing friendship of Goethe and Schiller. He was bitter against Schiller's idol, Kant, and all Kant's admirers, declaring the new philosophy destructive of Christian morals. He was growing old, and the bitterness of his youth was intensified by age and sickness. Schiller was in every way antagonistic to him, and the representation of *Wallenstein* "made him ill." Goethe, whose marvellous tolerance he had so sorely tried, and who never ceased to admire his fine qualities, said "one could not go to him without rejoicing in his mildness, one could not quit him without having been hurt by his bitterness." For some time Goethe was never mentioned in the Herder family, except with an almost inimical tone; and yet Herder's wife wrote to Knebel: "Let us thank God that Goethe still lives. Weimar would be intolerable without him." The reconciliation over the confirmation did not last long. They lived together in Jena for a few days, and parted never to see each other again. In December 1803 Herder was no more.

Discussing Physical Science with Ritter, Comparative Anatomy with Loder, Optics with Himly, and making observations on the Moon, the plan of a great poem, *De Natura Rerum*, rose in Goethe's mind, and like so many other plans remained a plan. Intercourse with the great philologist Wolff led him a willing student into Antiquity; and from Voss he tried to master the whole principles of Metre with the zeal of a philologist. There is something very piquant in the idea of the greatest poet of his nation, the most musical master of verse

in all possible forms, trying to acquire a theoretic knowledge of that which on instinct he did to perfection. It is characteristic of his new tendency to theorize on poetry.

Whoever reads the *Natürliche Tochter*, which was completed at this period, will probably attribute to this theorizing tendency the absence of all life and vigour which makes it "marble smooth and marble cold".* I confess not to have read this work, although I have twice commenced it. Yet Schiller admired it, and wrote to Humboldt: "The high symbolism with which it is handled, so that all the crude material is neutralized, and everything becomes portion of an ideal Whole, is truly wonderful. It is entirely Art, and thereby reaches the innermost Nature, through the power of truth." And Fichte—who, Varnhagen tells me, was with him in the box at the Theatre when the play was performed at Berlin, and was greatly moved by it—declared it to be Goethe's masterpiece. Rosenkrantz is amazed at the almost universal condemnation of the work. "What pathos, what warmth, what tragic pain!" he exclaims. Others would echo the exclamation—in irony. I will not offer an opinion on a work I have not read, beyond the implied opinion of not having been able to read it; but I will suggest that the very praise of Schiller and Fichte is a justification of the general verdict. A drama which is *so* praised, *i. e.*, for its "high symbolism", is a drama philosophers and critics may glorify, but which Art abjures. A drama, or any other poem, may carry with it material which admits of symbolical interpretation; but the poet who makes symbolism the substance and the purpose of his work, has mistaken his vocation. The whole Greek Drama has been *interpreted* into symbols by modern scholars; but if the Greek Dramatists had written with any such purpose as that detected

* A. W. Schlegel.

by the interpreters, they would never have survived to give interpreters the trouble. The *Iliad* has quite recently been interpreted into an allegory; Dante's *Divine Comedy* has been interpreted into an allegory; Shakspeare's plays have, by Ulrici, been interpreted into moral platitudes; the *Wahlverwandtschaften* has been interpreted into a "world-history". Indeed symbolism being in its very nature *arbitrary*—the indication of a meaning not directly expressed, but arbitrarily thrust *under* the expression—there is no limit to the power of *interpretation*. It is, however, quite certain that poets had not the meanings which their commentators find; and equally certain, that if poets wrote for commentators they would never produce masterpieces.

In December 1803 Weimar had a visitor whose rank is high among its illustrious guests: Madame de Stael. Napoleon would not suffer her to remain in France, and she was brought by Benjamin Constant to the German Athens, that she might see and know something of the men her work *De l'Allemagne* was to reveal to her countrymen. It is easy to ridicule Madame de Stael; to call her, as Heine does, "a whirlwind in petticoats", and a "Sultana of mind". But Germans should be grateful to her for that book, which still remains one of the best books written about Germany; and the lover of letters will not forget that her genius has, in various departments of literature, rendered for ever illustrious the power of the womanly intellect. Goethe and Schiller, whom she stormed with her cannonades of talk, spoke of her intellect with great admiration. Of all living creatures he had seen, Schiller said, she was "the most talkative, the most combative, the most gesticulative"; but she was "also the most cultivated, and the most gifted". The contrast between her French culture and his German culture, and the difficulty he had in expressing himself

in French, did not prevent his being much interested. In the sketch of her he sent to Goethe it is well said, "She insists on explaining everything; understanding everything; measuring everything. She admits of no Darkness; nothing Incommensurable; and where her torch throws no light, there nothing can exist. Hence her horror for the Ideal Philosophy which she thinks leads to mysticism and superstition. For what we call poetry she has no sense; she can only appreciate what is passionate, rhetorical, universal. She does not prize what is false, but does not always perceive what is true."

The Duchess Amalia was enchanted with her, and the Duke wrote to Goethe, who was at Jena, begging him to come over, and be seen by her; which Goethe very positively declined. He said, if she wished very much to see him, and would come to Jena, she should be very heartily welcomed; a comfortable lodging and a bourgeois table would be offered her, and every day they could have some hours together when his business was over; but he could not undertake to go to Court, and into society; he did not feel himself strong enough. In the beginning of 1804, however, he came to Weimar, and there he made her acquaintauce; that is to say, he received her in his own house, at first *tête-à-tête*, and afterwards in small circles of friends.

Except when she managed to animate him by her paradoxes or wit, he was cold and formal to her, even more so than to other remarkable people; and he has told us the reason. Rousseau had been drawn into a correspondence with two women, who addressed themselves to him as admirers; he had shown himself in this correspondence by no means to his advantage, now (1803) that the letters appeared in print.*

* The correspondence alluded to can be no other than that of Rousseau with Madame de la Tour-Franqueville and her friend, whose name is still

Goethe had read or heard of this correspondence, and Madame de Stael had frankly told him she intended to print his conversation.

This was enough to make him ill at ease in her society; and although she said he was "un homme d'un esprit prodigieux en conversation .... quand on le sait faire parler il est admirable", she never saw the real, but a factitious Goethe. By dint of provocation—and champagne—she managed to make him talk brilliantly; she never got him to talk to her seriously. On the 29th of February she left Weimar, to the great relief both of Goethe and Schiller.

Nothing calls for notice during the rest of this year, except the translation of an unpublished work by Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew*, and the commencement of the admirable work on *Winckelmann and his Age*. The beginning of 1805 found him troubled with a presentiment that either he or Schiller would die in this year. Both were dangerously ill. It was a touching scene when Schiller, a little recovered from his last attack, entered the sick room of his friend. They walked up to each other, and, without speaking a word, expressed their joy at meeting in a long and manly kiss. Both hoped with the return of spring for return of health and power. Schiller meanwhile was translating the *Phèdre* of Racine; Goethe was translating the *Rameau's Nephew*, and writing the history of the *Farbenlehre*.

The spring was coming, but on its blossoms Schiller's eyes were not to rest. On the 30th of April the friends parted for the last time. Schiller was going to the theatre. Goethe, too

unknown; it is one of the most interesting among the many interesting correspondences of women with celebrated men. A charming notice of it may be found in St. Beuve's *Causeries du Lundi*, vol. II.

* In the *Tag und Jahres Hefte*, 1804 (*Werke*, XXVII, p. 143), the reader will find Goethe's account of Mad. de Stael and her relation to him.

unwell to accompany him, said good-bye at the door of Schiller's house. During Schiller's illness Goethe was much depressed. Voss found him once pacing up and down his garden, crying by himself. He mastered his emotion as Voss told him of Schiller's state, and only said, "Fate is pitiless, and man but little."

It really seemed as if the two friends were to be united in the grave as they had been in life. Goethe grew worse. From Schiller life was fast ebbing. On the 8th of May he was given over. "His sleep that night was disturbed; his mind again wandered; with the morning he had lost all consciousness. He spoke incoherently and chiefly in Latin. His last drink was champagne. Towards three in the afternoon came on the last exhaustion; the breath began to fail. Towards four he would have called for naphtha, but the last syllable died upon his lips; finding himself speechless, he motioned that he wished to write something; but his hand could only trace three letters, in which was yet recognizable the distinct character of his writing. His wife knelt by his side; he pressed her hand. His sister-in-law stood with the physician at the foot of the bed, applying warm cushions to the cold feet. Suddenly a sort of electric shock came over his countenance; the head fell back; the deepest calm settled on his face. His features were as those of one in a soft sleep.

"The news of Schiller's death soon spread through Weimar. The theatre was closed; men gathered into groups. Each felt as if he had lost his dearest friend. To Goethe, enfeebled himself by long illness, and again stricken by some relapse, no one had the courage to mention the death of his beloved rival. When the tidings came to Henry Meyer, who was with him, Meyer left the house abruptly lest his grief might escape him. No one else had courage to break the intelligence. Goethe

perceived that the members of his household seemed embarrassed and anxious to avoid him. He divined something of the fact, and said at last 'I see—Schiller must be very ill.' That night they overheard him—the serene man who seemed almost above human affection, who disdained to reveal to others whatever grief he felt when his son died—they overheard Goethe weep! In the morning he said to a friend, 'Is it not true that Schiller was very ill yesterday?' The friend (it was a woman) sobbed. 'He is dead,' said Goethe faintly. 'You have said it,' was the answer. 'He is dead,' repeated Goethe, and covered his face with his hands."*

"The half of my existence is gone from me," he wrote to Zelter. His first thought was to continue the *Demetrius* in the spirit in which Schiller had planned it, so that Schiller's mind might still be with him, still working at his side. But the effort was vain. He could do nothing. "My diary," he says, "is a blank at this period; the white pages intimate the blank in my existence. In those days I took no interest in anything."

* Bulwer's *Life of Schiller*.

CHAPTER VII.

FAUST.

Although the First Part of *Faust* was not published until 1806, it was already completed before Schiller's death, and may therefore be fitly noticed in this place. For more than thirty years had the work been growing in its author's mind, and although its precise chronology is not ascertainable, yet an approximation is possible which will not be without service to the student.

The Faust-fable was familiar to Goethe as a child. In Strasburg, during 1770-71, he conceived the idea of fusing his personal experience into the mould of the old legend; but he wrote nothing of the work until 1774-5, when the ballad of the King of Thule, the first monologue, and the first scene with Wagner, were written; and during his love affair with Lili, he sketched Gretchen's catastrophe, the scene in the street, the scene in Gretchen's bedroom, the scenes between Faust and Mephisto during the walk, and in the street, and the garden scene. In his Swiss journey, he sketched the first interview with Mephisto and the compact; also the scene before the city gates, the plan of Helena (subsequently much modified), the scene between the student and Mephisto, and

Auerbach's cellar. When in Italy, he read over the old manuscript, and wrote the scenes of the witches' kitchen and the cathedral; also the monologue in the forest. In 1797, *the whole was remodelled.* Then were added the two Prologues, the Walpurgis night, and the dedication. In 1801, he completed it, as it now stands, retouching it perhaps in 1806, when it was published. Let us now with some carefulness examine this child of so much care.

The cock in Esop scratched a pearl into the light of day, and declared that to him it was less valuable than a grain of millet seed. The pearl is only a pearl to him who knows its value. And so it is with fine subjects: they are only fine in the hands of great artists. Where the requisite power exists, a happy subject is a fortune; without that power, it only serves to place incompetence in broader light. Mediocre poets have tried their prentice hands at Faust; poets of undeniable genius have tried to master it; Goethe alone has seen in it the subject to which his genius was fully adequate; and has produced from it the greatest poem of modern times:

> "An Orphic tale indeed,—
> A tale divine, of high and passionate thoughts,
> To their own music chaunted."

Although genius can find material in the trifles ordinary minds pass heedlessly by, it is only a very few subjects which permit the full display of genius. The peculiarities of a man's organization and education invest certain subjects with a charm and a significance which they have not to others. Such was *Der Freischütz* for Weber; the maternity of the Madonna for Raphael; *Faust* for Goethe. Thus it is that a fine subject becomes the pedestal whereon genius may stand in the unconstrained display of full proportions; or we may call it the marble out of which the lasting monument is carved.

Quite beyond my purpose and my limits would be any account of the various materials, historical and æsthetical, which German literature has gathered into one vast section on Faust and the Faust legend. There is not a single detail which has not exercised the industry and ingenuity of commentators, so that the curious need complain of no lack of informants. English readers will find in the translations by Hayward and Blackie a reasonable amount of such information pleasantly given; German readers will only have the embarrassment of a choice. Far more important than all learned apparatus, is the attempt to place ourselves at the right point of view for studying and enjoying this wondrous poem, the popularity of which is almost unexampled. It appeals to all minds with the irresistible fascination of an eternal problem, and with the charm of endless variety. It has every element: wit, pathos, wisdom, buffoonery, mystery, melody, reverence, doubt, magic, and irony; not a chord of the lyre is unstrung, not a fibre of the heart untouched. Students earnestly wrestling with doubt, striving to solve the solemn riddles of life, feel their pulses strangely agitated by this poem; and not students alone, but as Heine says, every billiard-marker in Germany puzzles himself over it. In *Faust* we see, as in a mirror, the eternal problem of our intellectual existence; and, beside it, the varied lineaments of our social existence. It is at once a problem and a picture. Therein lies its fascination. The problem embraces all questions of vital importance; the picture represents all opinions, all sentiments, all classes, moving on the stage of life. The great problem is stated in all its nudity; the picture is painted in all its variety.

This twofold nature of the work explains its popularity; and, what is more to our purpose, gives the clue to its secret of composition; a clue which all the critics I am acquainted with

have overlooked; and although I cannot but feel that considerable suspicion must attach itself to any opinion claiming novelty on so old a subject, I hope the contents of this chapter will furnish sufficient evidence in support of the theory, to justify its acceptance.* The conviction first arose in my mind as the result of an inquiry into the causes of the popularity of *Hamlet*. The two works are so allied, and so associated together in every mind, that the criticism of the one will be certain to throw light on the other.

Hamlet, in spite of a prejudice current in certain circles that if now produced for the first time it would fail, is the most popular play in our language. It *amuses* thousands annually, and it stimulates the minds of millions. Performed in barns and minor theatres oftener than in Theatres Royal, it is always and everywhere attractive. The lowest and most ignorant audiences delight in it. The source of the delight is twofold: First, its sublimity and reach of thought on topics the most profound; for the dullest soul can *feel* a grandeur which it cannot *understand*, and will listen with hushed awe to the out-pourings of a great meditative mind obstinately questioning fate: Secondly, its wondrous dramatic variety. Only consider for a moment the striking effects it has in the Ghost; the tyrant murderer; the terrible adulterous queen; the melancholy hero, doomed to so awful a fate; the poor Ophelia, broken-hearted and dying in madness; the play within a play, entrapping the conscience of the King; the ghastly mirth of gravediggers; the funeral of Ophelia interrupted by a quarrel over her grave betwixt her brother and her lover; and finally the hurried, bloody dénouement. Such are the figures woven

* It may obviate misconception, to state that the basis of this chapter is an essay I wrote on the *Three Fausts* in the *British and Foreign Review*, vol. XVIII.

on the tapestry by passion and poetry. Add thereto the absorbing fascination of profound thoughts. It may indeed be called the tragedy of thought, for there is as much reflection as action in it; but the reflection itself is made dramatic, and hurries the breathless audience along with an interest which knows no pause. Strange it is to notice in this work the indissoluble union of refinement with horrors, of reflection with tumult, of high and delicate poetry with broad, palpable, theatrical effects. The machinery is a machinery of horrors, physical and mental: ghostly apparitions—hideous revelations of incestuous adultery and murder—madness—Polonius killed like a rat while listening behind the arras—gravediggers casting skulls upon the stage and desecrating the churchyard with their mirth—these and other horrors form the machinery by which moves the highest, the grandest, and the most philosophic of tragedies.

It is not difficult to see how a work so prodigal should become so popular. *Faust*, which rivals it in popularity, rivals it also in prodigality. Almost every typical aspect of life is touched upon; almost every subject of interest finds an expression in almost every variety of rhythm. It gains a large audience because it appeals to a large audience:

> Die Masse könnt ihr nur durch Masse zwingen,
> Ein jeder sucht sich endlich selbst was aus.
> Wer Vieles bringt wird manchem Etwas bringen,
> Und jeder geht zufrieden aus dem Haus.

Or, as Blackie renders it:

> The mass can be compelled by mass alone,
> Each one at length seeks out what is his own.
> Bring much, and every one is sure to find
> From out your nosegay something to his mind.

Critics usually devote their whole attention to an exposition

of the Idea of Faust; and it seems to me that in this laborious search after a remote explanation they have overlooked the more obvious and natural explanation furnished by the work itself. The reader who has followed me thus far will be aware that I have little sympathy with that Philosophy of Art which consists in translating Art into Philosophy, and that I trouble myself, and him, very little with "considerations on the Idea." Experience tells me that the Artists themselves had quite other objects in view than that of developing an Idea; and experience further says that the Artist's public is by no means primarily anxious about the Idea, but leaves it entirely to the critics,—who cannot agree on the point among themselves. In studying a work of Art I proceed as in studying a work of Nature: after delighting in the effect, I try to ascertain what are the *means* by which the effect is produced, and not at all what is the Idea lying behind the means. If in dissecting an animal I get clear conceptions of the mechanism by which certain functions are performed, I do not derive any increase of real knowledge from being told that the functions are the final causes of the mechanism; while, on the other hand, if an *à priori* conception of "purpose" is made to do the work of actual inspection of the mechanism, I find myself in a swamp of conjectural metaphysics where no dry land is to be found. It is necessary to state so much before proceeding to analyze a work like *Faust*, which has elicited many volumes of metaphysical criticism. A poem is before me, and I dissect it, take up one piece of the organism after the other, show its position, and try to indicate its function. If the reader object to such criticism, this is a warning to skip the present chapter.

The Theatre Prologue. This is the opening of the work, and shows a strolling company of Players about to exhibit themselves in the market-place, to please the motley crowd with

some rude image of the Comedy and Tragedy of Life. The personages are three: the Manager, the Poet, and the Merry Andrew: three types representing the question of Dramatic Art in reference to poets and the public. The Manager opposes his hard practical sense to the vague yearnings and unworldly aspirings of the Poet; he thinks of receipts, the poet thinks of fame. But here, as ever, hard practical sense is not the best judge; the arbitration of a third is needed, and we have it in the Merry Andrew, who corrects both disputants by looking to the real issue, namely, the *amusement of the public*. When the poet flies off in declamations about Posterity, this wise and merry arbiter slily asks: Who then is to amuse the present? A question we feel repeatedly tempted to ask those lofty writers who, despising a success they have striven in vain to achieve, throw themselves with greater confidence on the Future; as if the Future in *its* turn would not also be a Present, having its despisers and its Jeremiahs.

The Theatre Prologue, brief though it is, has expressed the whole question of poets, managers, and public. It is the wisest word yet uttered on the topic, and seems as fresh and applicable as if written yesterday. No consideration of importance is omitted, and there are no superfluities. Every line is thrown off with the utmost ease, and with the perfect clearness of perfect strength. One might say without exaggeration that the mastery of genius is as distinctly traceable in these easy felicitous touches, as in any other part of the work; for it is perhaps in the treatment of such trifles that power is most decisively seen: inferior writers always overdo or underdo such things; they are inflated or flat. All bodies at a certain degree of heat become luminous, and in the exaltation of passion even an inferior mind will have inspirations of felicitous thought;

but, reduced to normal temperatures, that which before was luminous becomes opaque, and the inferior mind, being neither exalted by passion nor moved towards new issues by the pressure of crowding thoughts, exhibits its normal strength. And that is why the paradox is true of real mastery being most clearly discernible in trifles. When the wind is furiously sweeping the surface, we cannot distinguish the shallowest from the deepest stream; it is only when the winds are at rest that we can see to the bottom of the shallow stream, and perceive the deep stream to be beyond our fathom.

We may still call upon the wisdom of this Prologue. The Manager wants to know how best to attract the public:

> Sie sitzen schon, mit hohen Augenbraunen
> Gelassen da, und möchten gern erstaunen.
> Ich weiss wie man den Geist des Volks versöhnt;
> Doch so verlegen bin ich nie gewesen;
> Zwar sind sie an das Beste nicht gewöhnt
> *Allein sie haben schrecklich viel gelesen.*
>
> With eyebrows arch'd already they sit there,
> And gape for something new to make them stare.
> I know how to conciliate the mob,
> But ne'er yet felt it such a ticklish job:
> 'Tis true what they have read is not the best,
> But that they much have read must be confessed.*

The Poet, who never drifts towards Utilitarianism, replies in rhapsodies about his Art; whereupon the Merry Andrew bids him prove himself a master of his Art, by *amusing* the public.

> Let Fancy with her many-sounding chorus,
> Reason, Sense, Feeling, Passion, move before us;
> But mark you well! a spice of Folly too.

* Blackie's *Translation*. I shall generally follow this translation; but the passage just cited is not of the usual excellence. The last couplet of the original is one of those couplets which, in their ease, familiarity, and felicity, are the despair of translators.

The manager insists upon "incidents" above all things:

> They come to see, you must engage their eyes.

And he adds, with true managerial instinct,

> You give a piece—give it at once in pieces!
> In vain into an artful whole you glue it,—
> The public, in the long run, will undo it.

So the dispute runs on, till the Manager settles it by resolving to give a grand and motley spectacle

> From heaven to earth, and thence thro' earth to hell.

This sentence gives us the clue to the composition of the work; a clue which has usually been taken only as a guide through the mental labyrinth, through the phases of the psychological problem, instead of through that, and *also* through the scenes of life represented.

The *Prologue in Heaven* succeeds. In many quarters this Prologue has been strangely misunderstood. It has been called a parody of the Book of Job, and censured as a parody. It has been stigmatized as irrelevant and irreverent, out of keeping with the rest, and gratuitously blasphemous. Some translators have omitted it "as unfit for publication". Coleridge debated with himself, "whether it became his moral character to render into English, and so far certainly to lend his countenance to, language much of which he thought vulgar, licentious, and blasphemous".* And I will confess that my first impression was strongly against it; an impression which was only removed by considering the legendary nature of the poem, and the legendary style adopted. It is only organic analysis which can truly seize the meaning of organic elements; so long as we

* *Table Talk*, vol. II, p. 118.

judge an organism *ab extra*, according to the Idea, or according to *our* Ideas, and not according to *its* nature, we shall never rightly understand structure and function; and this is as true of poems as of animals. Madame de Stael admirably says of the whole work, "il serait véritablement trop naïf de supposer qu'un tel homme ne sache pas toutes les fautes de goût qu'on peut reprocher à sa pièce; mais il est curieux de connaître les motifs qui l'ont déterminé à les y laisser, ou plutôt à les y mettre." And in trying to understand what were the motives which induced Goethe to introduce this prologue, and to treat it in this style, we must dismiss at once the supposition that he meant to be blasphemous, and the supposition that he could not have been as grave and decorous as Klopstock, had he deemed it fitting. Let us look a little closer.

The wager between Mephistopheles and the Deity was part and parcel of the Legend. In adopting the Legend Goethe could not well omit this element, and his treatment of it is in the true mediæval style, as all who are familiar with mediæval legends, and especially those who are familiar with the Miracle-plays of Europe, will recognize at once. In these Miracle-plays we are startled by the coarsest buffoonery, and what to us sounds like blasphemy, side by side with the most serious lessons; things the most sacred are dragged through the dirt of popular wit; persons the most sacred are made the subject of jests and stories which would send a shudder through the pious reader of our times. As a specimen of the lengths to which this jesting spirit went, in the works of priests, performed by priests, and used for religious instruction, the following bit of buffoonery may be cited. In one of the plays, God the Father is seen sleeping on his throne during the

Crucifixion. An Angel appears to him; and this dialogue takes place:

"*Angel.* Eternal Father, you are doing what is not right, and will cover yourself with shame. Your much-beloved son is just dead, and you sleep like a drunkard.

"*God the Father.* Is he then dead?

"*Angel.* Ay, that he is.

"*God the Father.* Devil take me if I knew anything about it."*

Nothing is more certain than that such things were not intended as blasphemous; they were the naïve representations which uncultured minds naïvely accepted. In treating a mediæval Legend, Goethe therefore gave it something of the mediæval colouring—a faint tint, just enough to effect his purpose, when the real colour would have been an offence. In adopting the idea of the Prologue he followed the old puppet-play of *Faust*, of which there are many versions.† An inferior artist would assuredly have made this Prologue as grand and metaphysical as possible. Goethe intentionally made it naïve. We cannot suppose him unable to treat it otherwise had he so willed; but he did not will it so. He was led to write this scene by his study of the older literature, and the source of its inspiration is traceable in this naïveté.‡ Consider the whole tenor of the work, and see how great a want of keeping there would have been in a prologue which represented Mephistopheles and the Deity according to modern conceptions of severe pro-

* Quoted in Scherr: *Geschichte der Deutsche Cultur*, p. 171. In the early forms of the drama, I remember nothing so irreverent as this passage, but many of extreme coarseness and ignoble buffoonery. Nor is this strange perversion of the religious ceremony unexampled. In Greece, where the Drama was a religious festival, the same comic licence flourished unrestricted; the very stage trodden by the Eumenides and solemnized by the presence of the gods, was, in the after-piece, the scene of gross buffoonery, in which the gods were buffoons.

† See Magnin: *Histoire des Marionettes*, p. 325.

‡ It was probably this feeling of its naïveté which made him say that it ought to be translated into the French of Marot.

priety, when the rest of the work was treated according to legendary beliefs; scenes like that with the poodle, the Walpurgis Night, and the Witches' Kitchen, would have been in open contradiction with a Prologue in the modern spirit. It seems to me that the Prologue is just what it should be: poetical, with a touch of mediæval colouring. It strikes the key note; it opens the world of wonder and legendary belief, wherein you are to see transacted the great and mystic drama of life; it is the threshold at which you are bidden to lay aside your garments soiled with the dust of the work-day world; fairy garments are given in exchange, and you enter a new region, where a drama is acted, dream-like in form, in spirit terribly real.

Then, again, the language put into the mouth of Mephistopheles,—which is so irreverent as to make the unreflecting reader regard the whole Prologue as blasphemous,—is it not strictly in keeping? Here we see the "spirit that denies" so utterly and essentially irreverent, that even in the presence of the Creator he feels no awe; the grander emotions are not excitable within his soul; and, like all his species, he disbelieves that others feel such emotions: "Pardon me," he says, "I cannot utter fine phrases." To such spirits all grandeur is grandiloquence. Mephisto is not a hypocrite: he cannot pay even *that* homage to virtue. He is a sceptic, pure and simple. In the presence of the Lord he demeans himself much as we may imagine a "fast" young man behaving when introduced into the presence of a Goethe, without brains enough to be aware of his own insignificance. He offers to lay a wager, just as the fast youth would offer to "back" any opinion of his own; and the brief soliloquy in which he expresses his feelings on the result of the interview has a levity and a tinge of sarcasm intensely devilish.

There are, it will be observed, two Prologues: one on the Stage, the other in Heaven. The reason of this I take to lie in the twofold nature of the poem, in the two leading subjects to be worked out. The world and the world's ways are to be depicted; the individual soul and its struggles are to be pourtrayed. For the former we have the theatre-prologue, because "All the world 's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." For the latter we have the prologue in heaven, because heaven is the centre and the goal of all struggles, doubts, and reverence; and because Faust is struggling heavenward:

> Nicht irdisch ist des Thoren Trank noch Speise,
> Ihn treibt die Gährung in die Ferne.

"This fool's meat and drink are not earthly," says Mephisto. "The ferment of his spirit impels him towards the for ever distant."

There is also another organic necessity for these two prologues: in the first, we see the Manager and his Poet moving the puppets of the scene; in the second, we see the Lord and Mephistopheles moving the puppets of the drama within a drama. It is from strolling players that the cause of the whole representation proceeds; it is from heaven that the drama of the temptation issues. These two prologues were both written in the same year, and many years after the conception of the Faust-legend had taken shape in Goethe's mind. They were afterthoughts, and it becomes us to inquire what purpose they were intended to subserve. I believe that in his first conception he only intended the *individual* element of the work to be developed; and that the world-picture was an afterthought, the product of reflection. In this subsequent conception the *Second Part* was more or less forecast; and the two prologues are introductory to the whole poem in this new conception.

But to proceed with our analysis. The first scene is that of *Faust in his study.* The drama here begins. Faust sits amid his books and instruments, vain appliances of vain inquiry. Pale, and worn with midnight toil, he feels his efforts have been vain, feels that Science is impotent, feels that no answer to his questions can be extorted by mortal wisdom, and gives himself to magic.

> That I, with bitter-sweating brow,
> No more may teach what I do not know;
> That I with piercing ken may see
> The world's in-dwelling energy,
> The hidden seeds of life explore,
> And deal in words and forms no more.

The moon, which shines in upon him, recalls him to a sense of the Life without, which he has neglected in his study of parchments and old bones: *Und fragst du noch warum dein Herz,* he exclaims in the well-known lines, and opens the magic book to summon a spirit to his aid:

> *(He seizes the book, and pronounces with a mysterious air the sign of the Spirit. A red flame darts forth, and the Spirit appears in the flame.)*
>
> *Spirit.* Who calls me?
> *Faust (turning away).* Vision of affright!
> *Spirit.* Thou hast with mighty spells invoked me,
> And to obey thy call provoked me,
> And now——
> *Faust.* Hence from my sight!
> *Spirit.* Thy panting prayer besought my form to view,
> To hear my voice, and know my semblance too;
> Now bending from my lofty sphere to please thee,
> Here am I!—ha! what shuddering terrors seize thee,
> And overpower thee quite! where now is gone
> The soul's proud call? the breast that scorned to own
> Earth's thrall, a world in itself created,
> And bore and cherished? with its fellow sated

That swell'd with throbbing joy to leave its sphere
And vie with spirits, their exalted peer.
Where art thou, Faust? whose invocation rung
Upon mine ear, whose powers all round me clung?
Art *thou* that Faust? whom melts my breath away,
Trembling ev'n to the life-depths of thy frame,
Now shrunk into a piteous worm of clay!

Faust. Shall I then yield to thee, thou thing of flame?
I am thy peer, am Faust, am still the same!

Spirit. Where life's floods flow,
And its tempests rave,
Up and down I wave,
Flit I to and fro;
Birth and the grave,
Life's secret glow,
A changing motion,
A boundless ocean,
Whose waters heave
Eternally;
Thus on the noisy loom of Time I weave
The living mantle of the Deity.

Faust. Thou who round the wide world wendest,
Thou busy sprite, how near I feel to thee!

Spirit. Thou'rt like the spirit whom thou comprehendest,
Not me! *(vanishes.)*

Faust (astounded). Not thee!
Whom, then?
I, image of the Godhead;
Not like thee! *(knocking is heard.)*
Oh death!—'tis Wagner's knock—he comes to break
The charm that bound me while the Spirit spake!
Thus my supremest bliss ends in delusion
Marr'd by a sneaking pedant-slave's intrusion!

How fine is this transition, the breaking in of prose reality upon the dream-visions of the poet,—the entrance of Wagner, who, hearing voices, fancied Faust was declaiming from a Greek drama, and comes to profit by the declamation. Wagner is a type of the Philister, and pedant; he sacrifices himself to

Books as Faust does to Knowledge. He adores the letter. The dust of folios is his element, parchment the source of his inspiration.

Left once more to himself, Faust continues his sad soliloquy of despair. The thoughts, and the music in which they are uttered, must be sought in the original, no translation can be adequate. He resolves to die; and, seizing the phial which contains the poison, says:

I look on thee, and soothed is my heart's pain;
I grasp thee, straight is lulled my racking brain,
And wave by wave my soul's flood ebbs away.
I see the ocean wide before me rise,
And at my feet her sparkling mirror lies;
To brighter shores invites a brighter day.

He raises the cup to his lips when suddenly:

A sound of bells is heard, and distant quire-singing.

QUIRE OF ANGELS.

Christ is arisen!
Joy be to mortal man,
Whom, since the world began,
Evils inherited,
By his sins merited,
Through his veins creeping,
Sin-bound are keeping.

FAUST.

What murmurs deep, what notes, so clear and pure,
Draw from my lips the glass by force away?
Thus early do the bells their homage pay,
Of hollow music, to new Easter day!
Already sing the quires the soothing song
That erst, round the dark grave, an angel throng
Sung, to proclaim the great salvation sure!

QUIRE OF WOMEN.

With clothes of fine linen
All cleanly we swathed him;

With spices and balsams
All sweetly we bathed him;
In the tomb of the rock, where
His body was lain,
We come and we seek him,
But seek all in vain!

QUIRE OF ANGELS.

Christ is arisen!
Praised be his name!
His love shared our prison
Of sin and of shame.
He has borne the hard trial
Of self-denial,
And, victorious, ascends to the skies whence he came!

FAUST.

What seek ye here, ye gently powerful tones,
Sweet seraph-music mid a mortal's groans?
Such sounds may minds of weaker mould relieve,
I hear the message, but cannot believe;
For Faith's first-born, and best-loved child is still,
And still will be, a miracle.
To those bright spheres I may not dare to strive
From which the holy message doth resound;
Yet, fraught with memory of my youth, this sound
Hath power to warn from death, and bid me live.
A time there was when Heaven's very kiss,
On solemn Sabbath, seemed to fall on me,
When spoke the minster-bell devotion's bliss,
And prayer to God was burning ecstasy.
A holy dim unknown desire
Drove me, o'er hill and dale, away from men,
And, mid a thousand tears of fire,
I felt a world arise within me then.
This song proclaimed the sports of youth so gay,
And merry-makings when the spring began;
Now Memory holds my soul with potent sway,
And thoughts of childhood rule the full-grown man.
Oh! sound thou on, thou sweet celestial strain,
The tear doth gush, Earth claims her truant son again.

QUIRE OF THE DISCIPLES.

By death of sorrow, though
Laid in the lowly grave,
Soars he sublimely now
Whence he us came to save.
Proudly exalted He,
Bliss of his Father near;
On the earth's bosom we,
Burden'd are waiting here:
Comfortless left are we,
Toiling through earth's annoy,
Weeping to envy thee,
Master, thy joy!

QUIRE OF ANGELS.

Christ is arisen
From the corrupting clay
Break ye your fetters,
Joyful, away!
Praising, by deeds of love,
Him who now reigns above,
Feeding the brethren poor,
Preaching salvation sure,
Joys that shall aye endure,
Boldly withouten fear,
For He is near.

This opening scene was *suggested* by the old puppet-play in which Faust appears, surrounded with compasses, spheres, and cabalistic instruments, wavering between theology, the divine science; philosophy, the human science; and magic, the infernal science. But this hint Goethe has enriched from his own wealth of thought and experience, and made the wondrous scene known to all.

The scene before the gate.—We quit the gloomy study, and the solitary struggles of the individual, to breathe the fresh air, and contemplate everyday life, and everyday joyousness. It is Sunday; students and maidservants, soldiers and shopkeepers, are thronging out of the city gates on their way to

various suburban beerhouses which line the high road. Clouds of dust and smoke accompany the throng; joyous laughter, incipient flirtations, merry song, and eager debates, give us glimpses of the common world. This truly German picture is wonderfully painted, and its place in the poem is significant, showing how life is accepted by the common mind, in contrast with the previous scene which showed life pressing on the student, demanding from him an interpretation of its solemn significance. Faust has wasted his days in questioning; the people spend theirs in frivolous pursuits, or sensual enjoyment, the great riddle of the world never troubling them, for to them the world is a familiarity and no mystery. They are more anxious about good tobacco and frothy beer, about whether this one will dance with that one, and about the new official dignitaries, than about all that the heavens above or earth beneath can have of mystery. Upon this scene Faust, the struggler, and Wagner, the pedant, come to gaze. It affects Faust deeply, and makes him feel how much wiser these simple people are than he is—for they enjoy.

> Hier ist des Volkes wahrer Himmel
> Zufrieden jauchzet gross und Klein:
> *Hier bin ich Mensch, hier darf ich's seyn.*

Yes, here he feels himself a man, one of the common brotherhood, for here he yearns after the enjoyments which he sees them pursuing. But Wagner, true pedant, feels nothing of the kind; he is only there because he wishes to be with Faust. He is one of those who in the presence of Niagara would vex you with questions about arrow-headed inscriptions, who in the presence of a village festival would discuss the origin of the Pelasgi.

The people crowd round Faust, paying him the reverence always paid by the illiterate to the "scholar". Wagner sees

it with envy; Faust feels it to be a mockery. Reverence to him, who feels profoundly his own insignificance! He seats himself upon a stone, and gazing on the setting sun, pours forth melancholy reflections on the worthlessness of life, and the inanity of his struggles. The old peasant has recalled to him the scenes of his youth, when while the fever raged he was always tending the sick, and saved so many lives, "helping, helped by the Father of Good". Seated on that stone, the visions of his youth come back upon his mind:

> Here sat I oft, plunged in deep thought, alone,
> And wore me out with fasting and with prayer.
> Rich then in hope, in faith then strong,
> With tears and sobs my hands I wrung,
> And weened the end of that dire pest,
> From the will of Heaven to rest.

His means were magic.

> Here was the medicine, and the patient died,
> But no one questioned—who survived?
> And thus have we, with drugs more curst than hell,
> Within these vales, these mountains here,
> Raged than the very pest more fell!
> I have myself to thousands poisons given;
> They pin'd away, and I must live to hear
> Men for the reckless murd'rers thanking heaven!

Wagner does not understand such scruples. He is not troubled like Faust with a consciousness of a double nature:—

> Two souls, alas! within my bosom dwell,
> Whose hostile natures ceaseless strive together;
> The one by stubborn power of love compelled,
> With clutching organs to the world is held;
> The other from earth's misty regions soars,
> To join the realms of high progenitors.

The Poodle appears, to interrupt this dialogue, and Wagner,

with characteristic stupidity, sees nothing *but* a Poodle in the apparition:

Ich sah ihn lange schon, nicht wichtig schien er mir.

The spiritual insight of Faust is more discerning. They quit the scene, the poodle following.

Faust's Study. The student and the poodle enter. The thoughts of Faust are solemn, which makes the poodle restless; this restlessness becomes greater and greater as Faust begins to translate the Bible, an act which indeed is enough to agitate the best disposed devil. A bit of incantation follows, and Mephistopheles appears. I must not linger over the details of the scene, tempting as they are, but come to the compact between Faust and Mephistopheles. The state of mind which induces this compact has been artfully prepared. Faust has been led to despair of attaining the high ambition of his life; he has seen the folly of his struggles; seen that Knowledge is a will-o'-the-wisp to which he has sacrificed Happiness. He now pines for Happiness, though he disbelieves in it as he disbelieves in Knowledge. In utter scepticism he consents to sell his soul *if* ever he shall realize Happiness:

Mephistopheles. I bind myself to be thy servant here,
And to thine every wink obedient be,
If, when we meet again in *yonder* sphere,
Thou pledge thyself to be the same to me.
Faust. What *yonder* is I little care to know,
Provided I be happy here below;
The future world will soon enough arise,
When the present in ruin lies.
'Tis from this earth my stream of pleasure flows,
This sun it is that shines on all my woes:
And, am I once from this my home away,
Then happen freely what happen may.
Concern 'tis none of mine to hear,
If then, as now, we hate and love;

Or if in yonder world, as here,
An under be, and an above.
Mephistopheles. Thus seem'st thou in a favourable train,
Advantage from my proffered aid to gain.
Close with my plan, and thou shalt see
Anon such pleasant tricks from me,
As, on this earth, no son of man
Hath witnessed since the world began.
Faust. Poor helpless devil, what hast thou to give,
For which the spirit of a man might strive ?
That soul sublime, to know whose longings high
The powers of thee and thine must still defy !
True thou hast food that sateth never,
And yellow gold that, restless ever,
Like quicksilver between the fingers,
Only to escape us, lingers,
A game where we are sure to lose our labour,
A maiden that, while hanging on my breast,
With stolen looks unites her to my neighbour,
And honour by which gods are blest,
That, like a meteor, vanishes in air.
Shew me the fruit that rots *before* 'tis broken,
And trees that day by day their green repair !
Mephis. A word of mighty meaning thou hast spoken,
Yet such commission makes not me despair.
Believe me, friend, we only need to try it,
And we too may enjoy our morsel sweet in quiet.
Faust. If ever, with composed mind,
Upon a bed of sloth I lay me,
My further fate with joy I leave thee !
Canst thou with soothing flatteries sway me,
That self-complacency I find,
Canst with enjoyment thou deceive me,
Then be my latent sand-grain run !
A wager on it !
Mephistopheles. Done !
Faust. And done, and done !
When to the moment I shall say,
Stay, thou art so lovely, stay !
Then with thy fetters bind me round,

Then perish I with cheerful glee!
Then may the knell of death resound,
Then from thy service art thou free!
The clock may stand,
And the falling hand
Mark the time no more for me!

What profound sadness is implied in the compact, that if ever he shall say to the passing moment, "Stay, thou art fair," he is willing to perish eternally!

Faust. The striving of my every faculty
Is one with the promise I make to thee.
Too high hath soared my blown-up pride,
I sink down humbled at thy side,
The Mighty Spirit of All hath scorned me,
And Nature from her secrets spurned me:
The thread of thought is rent in twain,
All science I loathe with its wranglings vain.
In the depths of sensual joy, let us tame
Our glowing passion's restless flame!
In magic veil, from unseen hand,
Be wonders ever at our command!
Plunge we us into the rushing of Time!
Into Action's rolling main!
Then let pleasure and pain,
Loss and gain,
Joy and sorrow, alternate chime!
Change the world as it can,
Still restless busy is the man.
Mephistopheles. To thee I set nor bound nor measure,
Every dainty thou may'st snatch at,
Every flying joy may'st catch at,
And take thy full of every pleasure,
Only have courage, friend, and be not shy!
Faust. Thou markest well, I do not speak of joy,
Pleasure that smarts, giddy intoxication,
Enamour'd hate, and stimulant vexation.
My bosom, from the thirst of knowledge free,
To every human pang shall opened be,

Mine inner self with every man shall share
His portion of enjoyment and of care;
Their deepest and their highest I will know,
And on my bosom heap their weal and woe,
My proper self unto their self extend,
And with them too be wrecked, and ruined in the end.

This scene of the compact has also its origin in the old Puppet play, and very curious is it to trace how the old hints are developed by Goethe. In the Augsburg version there is one condition among those stipulated by Mephistopheles to the effect that Faust shall never again ascend the theological chair. "But what will the public say?" asks Faust. "Leave that to me," Mephisto replies; "I will take your place; and believe me I shall add to the reputation you have gained in biblical learning."* Had Goethe known this version, he would probably not have omitted such a sarcastic touch.

I must pass over the inimitable scene which follows between Mephisto and the young Student newly arrived at the University, with boundless desire for knowledge. Every line is a sarcasm, or a touch of wisdom. The *position* of this scene in its relation to the whole, deserves, however, a remark. What is the scene, but a withering satire on every branch of knowledge? and where does it occur, but precisely at that juncture when Knowledge has by the hero been renounced; when Books are closed for ever; and Life is to be enjoyed? Thus the words of Mephisto, that Theory is a greybeard, and Life a fresh tree, green and golden—

Grau, theurer Freund, ist alle Theorie,
Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum—

prepare us for the utter abjuration of Theory, and the eager pursuit of Enjoyment. This leads to

Auerbach's Cellar, and its scene of Aristophanic buffoonery.

* *Das Closter*, vol. v, p. 326.

What a scene it is! The cellar reeks with the fumes of bad wine and stale tobacco; its blackened arches ring with the sound of boisterous mirth and noisy songs. The sots display themselves in all their sottishness. And *this* is one form of human enjoyment! A thing still unhappily to be seen in every city of Europe. Faust looks on with a sort of bewildered disgust, which soon wearies him; and then away! away! to the other scene as foul, as hideous, to

The Witches' Kitchen. Here Faust passes from bestiality to bestiality, from material grossness to spiritual grossness, from the impurity of sots to the impurity of witches. In this den of sorcery he drinks of the witch's potion, which will make him, as Mephisto says, see a Helen in the first woman he meets. Rejuvenescence is accompanied by desires hitherto unknown to him; he is young, and young passions hurry him into the "roaring flood of time".

Meeting with Margaret. The simple girl, returning from church, is accosted by Faust, and answers him somewhat curtly; here commences the love-episode which gives to the poem a magic none can resist. Shakspeare himself has drawn no such portrait as that of Margaret: no such peculiar union of passion, simplicity, homeliness, and witchery. The poverty and inferior social position of Margaret are never lost sight of; she never becomes an abstraction; it is Love alone which exalts her above her lowly station, and it is only *in* passion she is so exalted. Very artful and very amusing is the contrast between this simple girl and her friend Martha, who makes love to Mephisto with direct worldly shrewdness. The effect of this contrast in the celebrated garden scene is very fine; and what a scene that is! I have no language in which to express its intense and overpowering effect: the picture is one which remains indelible in the memory; certain lines linger in the

mind, and stir it like the memory of deep pathetic music. For instance, Margaret's asking him to think of her, even if it be for a moment,—she will have time enough to think of him:

> Denkt ihr an mich ein Augenblickchen nur,
> *Ich werde Zeit genug an euch zu denken haben:*

What a picture of woman's lonely life, in which the thoughts, not called out by the busy needs of the hour, centre in one object! And then that exquisite episode of her plucking the flower "He loves me—loves me not"; followed by this charming reflection when Faust has departed:

> Du lieber Gott! was so ein Mann
> Nicht alles alles denken kann!
> Beschämt nur steh' ich vor ihm da,
> Und sag' zu allen Sachen ja.
> Bin doch ein arm unwissend Kind
> Begreife nicht was er an mir find't.

The naïveté of expression is not to be translated. Blackie has given the sense:

> Dear God! what such a man as this
> Can think on any thing you may!
> I stand ashamed, and answer yes
> To every word that he may say.
> I wonder what a man so learned as he
> Can find in a poor simple girl like me.

Wood and Cavern. I do not understand the relation of this scene to the whole. Faust is alone among the solitudes of Nature, pouring out his rapture and his despair:

> *Faust.* Alas! that man enjoys no perfect bliss,
> I feel it now. Thou gav'st me with this joy,
> Which brings me near and nearer to the gods,
> A fellow, whom I cannot do without;
> Though, cold and heartless, he debases me
> Before myself, and, with a single breath

Blows all the bounties of thy love to nought.
He fans within my breast a raging fire
For that fair image, busy to do ill.
Thus reel I from desire on to enjoyment,
And in enjoyment languish for desire.

Mephisto enters, and the two wrangle. The scene is full of fine things, but its position in the work is not clear to me. It is followed by that scene in Margaret's room which exhibits her at the spinning-wheel, singing *Meine Ruh' ist hin*—"my peace is gone, my heart is sad;" and is succeeded by the second Garden scene, in which she questions Faust about his religion. I must give the famous confession of Faith, though more literally than Blackie renders it:

Misunderstand me not, thou lovely one.
Who dare name Him?
And who confess:
"I believe in Him?"
Who can feel
And force himself
To say: "I believe not in Him?"
The All-encompasser,
The All-sustainer
Encompasses, sustains he not
Thee, Me, Himself?
Does not the Heaven arch itself above?
Lies not the earth firm here below?
And rise not the eternal stars
Looking downwards friendly?
Gaze not our eyes into each other,
And is not all thronging
To thy head and heart,
Weaving in eternal mystery
Invisibly visibly about thee?
Fill up thy heart therewith, in all its greatness,
And when thou'rt wholly blest in this emotion,
Then call it what thou wilt,
Call it Joy! Heart! Love! God!

I have no name for it,
Feeling is all-in-all.
Name is sound and smoke,
Clouding the glow of Heaven.

Grander, deeper, holier thoughts are not to be found in poetry. Margaret feels this confession to be the same in substance as what the Priest tells her, only in somewhat different language :

Nur mit ein bischen andern Worten.

There is something inexpressibly touching in her solicitude about her lover's faith; it serves to bring out one element of her character; as her instinctive aversion to Mephisto brings out another element: she sees on his forehead that he feels no sympathy, that

He never yet hath loved a human soul.

In his presence she almost feels that her own love vanishes; certain it is that in his presence she cannot pray.

The guileless innocence which prattles thus, prepares us for the naïve readiness with which she expresses her willingness to admit her lover to her apartment, and consents to give her mother the sleeping draught.

Thou best of men, thy very look can sway me
With strange resistless impulse to obey thee;
So much already have I done for thee,
That to refuse thee now would be in vain.

This scene is, with terrible significance, followed by that brief scene at the Well, where Margaret hears her friend Bessy triumph, feminine-wise, over the fall of one of their companions:

For every woe a tear may claim,
Except an erring sister's shame—

and women, in all other things so compassionate, are merciless to each other precisely in those situations where feminine sympathy would be most grateful, where feminine tenderness should be most suggestive. Bessy says not a word against the seducer; her wrath falls entirely on the victim, who has been "rightly served." Margaret—taught compassion by experience—cannot *now* triumph as formerly she would have triumphed, when she

> Scarce found words enough to name
> The measure of another's shame.
> It seemed so black, yet blackened I it more,
> And when it blackest was, I'd have it blacker still.

But now she too is become what she chid, she too is a sinner, and cannot chide! The closing words of this soliloquy have never been translated; there is a something in the simplicity and intensity of the expression which defies translation.

> Doch—alles was dazu mich trieb,
> *Gott! war so gut! ach war so lieb!*

The meaning is, "Yet if I sinned, the sin came to me in shape so good, so lovely, that I loved it."

The next scene shows her praying to the Virgin, the Mother of Sorrows; and this is succeeded by the return of her brother Valentine, suffering greatly from his sister's shame; he interrupts the serenade of Faust, attacks him, is stabbed by Mephisto, falls, and expires uttering vehement reproaches against Margaret. From this bloodshed and horror we are led to the Cathedral. Margaret prays amid the crowd—the evil spirit at her side. A solemn, almost stifling sense of awe rises through the mind at this picture of the harassed sinner seeking refuge, and finding fresh despair. Around her kneel in silence those who hear with comfort the words to her so terrible:

Dies iræ, dies illa,
Solvet sæclum in favilla !

and when the choir bursts forth—

Judex ergo cum sedebit
Quidquid latet apparebit,
Nil inultum remanebit—

she is overpowered by remorse, for the Evil Spirit interprets these words in their most appalling sense.

The Walpurgis Nacht. The introduction of this scene in this place would be a great error if *Faust* were simply a drama. The mind resents being snatched away from its contemplation of human passion, and plunged into the vagaries of dreamland. After shuddering with Margaret, we are in no mood for the Blocksberg. But *Faust* is not a drama; its purpose is not mainly that of unfolding before our eyes the various evolutions of an episode of life; its object is not to rivet attention through a story. It is a grand legendary spectacle, in which all phases of life are represented. The scene on the Blocksberg is part of the old Legend, and is to be found in many versions of the puppet play.* Note how Goethe introduces the scene immediately after that in the Cathedral—thus representing the wizard-element in contrast with the religious element; just as previously he contrasted the Witches' Kitchen and its orgies with the orgies of Auerbach's cellar.

We must not linger on the Blocksberg, but return to earth, and the tragic drama there hastening to its dénouement. Seduction has led to infanticide; infanticide has led to the condemnation of Margaret. Faust learns it all: learns that a triple murder lies to his account—Valentine, Margaret, and he

* In the Strasburg version, Mephisto promises Hanswurst a steed on which he may galop through the air; but instead of a winged horse, there comes an old goat with a light under his tail.

child. In his despair he reproaches Mephisto for having concealed this from him, and wasted his time in insipid fooleries. Mephisto coldly says Margaret is not the first who has so died. Upon which Faust breaks forth: "Not the first! Misery! Misery! by no human soul to be conceived! that more than one creature of God should ever have been plunged into the depth of this woe! that the first, in the writhing agony of her death, should not have atoned for the guilt of all the rest before the eyes of the eternally Merciful!"

One peculiarity is noticeable in this scene: it is the only bit of prose in the whole work;—what could have determined him to write it in prose? At first I thought it might be the nature of the scene; but the intensity of language seems to demand verse, and surely the scene in Auerbach's cellar is more prosaic in its nature than this? The question then remains, and on it the critic may exert his ingenuity.

What painting in the six brief lines which make up the succeeding scene! Faust and Mephisto are riding over a wild and dreary plain; the sound of carpenters at work on the gibbet informs them of the preparations for the execution of Margaret.

And now the final scene opens. Faust enters the dungeon where Margaret lies huddled on a bed of straw, singing wild snatches of ancient ballads, her reason gone, her end approaching. The terrible pathos of this interview draws tears into our eyes after twenty readings. As the passion rises to a climax, the grim, passionless face of Mephistopheles appears—thus completing the circle of irony which runs throughout the poem. Everyone feels this scene to be untranslateable. The witchery of such lines as

Sag' niemand dass du schon bei Gretchen warst,

Mr. Hayward has already pointed out as beyond translation;

"indeed it is only by a lucky chance that a succession of simple, heartfelt expressions or idiomatic felicities are ever capable of exact representation in another language."* But I must nevertheless quote this scene; and I quote Mr. Hayward's prose version, as more nearly representing the original than any poetical version I have at hand:—

Margaret (hiding her face in the bed of straw). Woe! woe! They come. Bitter death!

Faust (softly). Hush! hush! I come to free thee.

Margaret (throwing herself before him). If thou art human, feel for my wretchedness.

Faust. You will wake the guard by your cries! *(He takes hold of the chains to unlock them.)*

Margaret (on her knees). Who has given you, headsman, this power over me? You come for me whilst it is yet midnight. Be merciful and let me live. Is not to-morrow morning soon enough? *(She stands up.)* I am yet so young, so young! and am to die already! I was fair, too, and that was my undoing! My true-love was near—he is now far away. Torn lies my garland, scattered the flowers. Don't take hold of me so roughly! Spare me! What have I done to you? Let me not implore in vain! I never saw you before in all my life, you know!

Faust. Can I endure this misery!

Margaret. I am now entirely in thy power. Only let me first give suck to the child. I pressed it this whole night to my heart. They took it away to vex me, and now say I killed it. And I shall never be happy again. They sing songs upon me! It is wicked of the people. An old tale ends so,—who bids them apply it?

Faust throws himself on the ground. A lover lies at thy feet, to unloose the bonds of wretchedness.

Margaret throws herself by his side. Aye, let us kneel to invoke the saints. See, under these steps, under the threshold, hell is seething! The Evil One, with fearful fury, is making a din.

Faust (passionately). Margaret! Margaret!

Margaret (listening). That was my true-love's voice. *(She springs up. The chains fall off.)* Where is he? I heard him call. I am free. Nobody shall hinder me. I will fly to his neck! lie on his bosom! He

* *Translation of Faust:* Preface, p. xxxi, 3rd Edition.

called Margaret! He stood upon the threshold. In the midst, through the howling and clattering of hell, through the grim, devilish scoffing, I knew the sweet, the loving tone again.

Faust. 'Tis I.

Margaret. 'Tis thou! Ah, say so once again! *(Clasping him.)* 'Tis he! 'Tis he! Whither is all my wretchedness? Whither the agony of the dungeon?—the chains? 'Tis thou! Thou com'st to save me. I am saved!—There again already is the street, where I saw thee for the first time; and the cheerful garden, where I and Martha waited for thee.

Faust (striving to take her away). Come! come with me!

Margaret. Oh stay! I like to stay where thou stayest. *(Caressing him.)*

Faust. Haste! If you do not make haste, we shall pay dearly for it.

Margaret. What! you can no longer kiss? So short a time away from me, my love, and already forgotten how to kiss! Why do I feel so sad upon your neck? when, in other times, a whole heaven came over me from your words, your looks; and you kissed me as if you were going to smother me! Kiss me! or I will kiss you! *(She embraces him.)* O woe! your lips are cold,—are dumb. Where have you left your love? who has robbed me of it? *(She turns from him.)*

Faust. Come! follow me! take courage, my love. I will press thee to my heart with thousandfold warmth—only follow me! I ask thee but this.

Margaret (turning to him). And is it thou, then? And is it thou, indeed?

Faust. 'Tis I. Come along!

Margaret. You undo my fetters, you take me to your bosom again! How comes it that you are not afraid of me? And do you then know, my love, whom you are freeing?

Faust. Come! come! the depth of night is already passing away.

Margaret. I have killed my mother, I have drowned my child. Was it not bestowed on thee and me?—on thee, too? 'Tis thou! I scarcely believe it. Give me thy hand. It is no dream—thy dear hand!—but oh, 'tis damp! Wipe it off. It seems to me as if there was blood on it. Oh, God! what hast thou done? Put up thy sword! I pray thee, do!

Faust. Let what is past, be past. Thou wilt kill me.

Margaret. No, you must remain behind. I will describe the graves to to you! you must see to them the first thing to-morrow. Give my

mother the best place;—my brother close by;—me, a little on one side, only not too far off! And the little one on my right breast; no one else will lie by me. To nestle to *thy* side,—that was a sweet, a dear delight! But it will never be mine again. I feel as if I were irresistibly drawn to you, and you were thrusting me off. And yet, 'tis you; and you look so good, so kind.

Faust. If you feel that 'tis I, come along.

Margaret. Out there?

Faust. Into the free air!

Margaret. If the grave is without, if death lies in wait,—then come! Hence into the eternal resting-place, and not a step farther.—Thou art now going away? O Henry, could I but go too!

Faust. Thou canst! Only consent! The door stands open.

Margaret. I dare not go out; there is no hope for me! What avails it flying? They are lying in wait for me. It is so miserable to be obliged to beg,—and, what is worse, with an evil conscience, too. It is so miserable to wander in a strange land,—and they will catch me, do as I will.

Faust. I shall be with thee.

Margaret. Quick, quick! Save thy poor child. Away! Keep the path up by the brook—over the bridge—into the wood—to the left where the plank is—in the pond. Only quick and catch hold of it! it tries to rise! it is still struggling! Help! help!

Faust. Be calm, I pray! Only one step, and thou art free.

Margaret. Were we but past the hill! There sits my mother on a stone—my brain grows chill!—there sits my mother on a stone, and waves her head to and fro. She beckons not, she nods not, her head is heavy; she slept so long, she'll wake no more. She slept that we might enjoy ourselves. Those were pleasant times!

Faust. As no prayer, no persuasion, is here of any avail, I will risk bearing thee away.

Margaret. Let me go! No, I endure no violence! Lay not hold of me so murderously! Time was, you know, when I did all to pleasure you.

Faust. The day is dawning! My love! my love!

Margaret. Day! Yes, it is growing day! The last day is breaking in! My wedding-day it was to be! Tell no one that thou hadst been with Margaret already. Woe to my garland! It is all over now! We shall meet again, but not at the dance. The crowd thickens; it is not heard. The square, the streets, cannot hold them. The bell tolls!—

the staff breaks! How they bind and seize me! Already am I hurried off to the blood-seat! Already quivering for every neck is the sharp steel which quivers for mine. Dumb lies the world as the grave!

Faust. Oh that I had never been born!

Mephistopheles appears without. Up! or you are lost. Vain hesitation! Lingering and prattling! My horses shudder; the morning is gloaming up.

Margaret. What rises up from the floor? He! He! Send him away! What would he at the holy place? He would me!

Faust. Thou shalt live!

Margaret. Judgment of God! I have given myself up to thee.

Mephistopheles to Faust. Come! come! I will leave you in the scrape with her.

Margaret. Thine am I, Father! Save me, ye Angels! Ye Holy Hosts, range yourselves round about, to guard me! Henry! I tremble to look upon thee.

Mephistopheles. She is judged!

Voice from above. Is saved!

Mephistopheles to Faust. Hither to me! *(Disappears with Faust.)*

Voice from within, dying away. Henry! Henry!

The survey just taken, disclosing a succession of varied scenes representative of Life, will not only help to explain the popularity of Faust, but help also to explain the secret of its composition. The rapidity and variety of the scenes give the work an air of formlessness, until we have seized the principle of organic unity binding these scenes into a whole. The reader who first approaches it is generally disappointed: the want of visible connexion makes it appear more like a Nightmare than a work of Art. Even accomplished critics have been thus misled. Thus Coleridge, who battled so ingeniously for Shakspeare's Art, was utterly at a loss to recognize any unity in Faust. "There is no whole in the poem," he said, "the scenes are mere magic-lantern pictures, and a large part of the work is to me very flat."* Coleridge, combating French critics, pro-

* *Table Talk*, vol. II, p. 114.

claimed (in language slightly altered from Schlegel) that the unity of a work of Art is "organic, not mechanic"; and he was held to have done signal service by pointing out the unity of Shakspeare's conception underlying variety of detail; but when he came to Goethe, whom he disliked, and of whom he always spoke unworthily, he could see nothing but magic-lantern scenes in variety of detail. If *Hamlet* is not a magic-lantern, *Faust* is not. The successive scenes of a magic-lantern have no connexion with a general plan; have no dependence one upon the other. In the analysis just submitted to the reader, both the general plan and the interdependence of the scenes have, it is hoped, been made manifest. A closer familiarity with the work removes the first feeling of disappointment. We learn to understand it, and our admiration grows with our enlightenment. The picture is painted with so cunning a hand, and yet with so careless an air, that Strength is veiled by Grace, and nowhere strains itself into Effort.

I believe few persons have read *Faust* without disappointment. There are works which, on a first acquaintance, ravish us with delight: the ideas are new; the form is new; the execution striking. In the glow of enthusiasm we pronounce the new work a masterpiece. We study it, learn it by heart, and somewhat weary our acquaintances by the emphasis of enthusiasm. In a few years, or it may be months, the work has become unreadable, and we marvel at our ancient admiration. The ideas are no longer novel; they appear truisms or perhaps falsisms. The execution is no longer admirable, for we have discovered its trick. In familiarizing our minds with it, our admiration has been slowly strangled by the contempt which familiarity is said to breed, but which familiarity only breeds in contemptible minds, or for things contemptible. The

work then was no masterpiece? Not in the least.* A masterpiece excites no sudden enthusiasm; it must be studied much and long, before it is fully comprehended; we must grow up to it, for it will not descend to us. Its influence is less sudden, more lasting. Its emphasis grows with familiarity. We never become disenchanted; we grow more and more awestruck at its infinite wealth. We discover no trick, for there is none to discover. Homer, Shakspeare, Raphael, Beethoven, Mozart, never storm the judgment; but, once fairly in possession, they retain it with increasing influence. I remember looking at the Elgin marbles with an indifference which I was ashamed to avow; and since then I have stood before them with a rapture almost rising into tears. On the other hand, works which now cannot detain me a minute before them, excited sudden enthusiasm such as in retrospection seems like the boyish taste for unripe apples. With *Faust* my first feeling was disappointment. Not understanding the real nature of the work, I thought Goethe had missed his aim, because he did not fulfil my conceptions. This is the arrogance of criticism. We demand that the Artist, who never thought of us, should work in the direction of our thoughts! As I grew older, and began to read *Faust* in the original (helped by the dictionary), its glory gradually dawned upon my mind. It is now one of those works which exercise a fascination to be compared only to the minute and inexhaustible love we feel for those long dear to us, every expression having a peculiar and, by association, quite mystic influence. Turning over its pages, or meeting with a passage quoted, there seems to rise from the verses a breath of indefina-

* "A deduction must be made from the opinion which even the wise express of a new book or occurrence. Their opinion gives me tidings of their mood, and some vague guess at the new fact, but is nowise to be trusted as the lasting relation between that intellect and that thing."—*Emerson.*

ble sweetness, filling the mind with pleasure, such as when a fragment of well-known melody is wafted from a distance.

A masterpiece like *Faust*, because it is a masterpiece, will be almost certain to create disappointment, in proportion to the expectations formed of it. Sir Joshua Reynolds, on his first visit to the Vatican, could not conceal his mortification at not relishing the works of Raphael, and was only relieved from it on discovering that others had experienced the same feeling. "The truth is," he adds, "that if these works had been really what I expected, they would have contained beauties superficial and alluring, but by no means such as would have entitled them to their great reputation." We need not be surprised therefore to hear even distinguished men express unfavourable opinions of *Faust*. Charles Lamb, for instance, thought it a vulgar melodrame in comparison with Marlow's *Faustus;* an opinion which will appear more extravagant when we have given an analysis of Marlowe's work, which we shall do presently; an opinion he never could have formed had he read *Faust* in the original. He read it in a translation, and no work suffers more from translation; so that however unwilling a reader may be that his competence to pronounce a judgment should be called in question, when he has only an English version from which to judge, it must be said in all seriousness and with the most complete absence of exaggeration and prejudice, that in translation he really has not the work before him.

Several times in these pages I have felt called upon to protest against the adequacy of all translation of poetry. In its happiest efforts, translation is but approximation; and its efforts are not often happy. A translation may be good *as* translation, but it cannot be an adequate reproduction of the original. It may be a good poem; it may be a good imitation of another poem; it may be better than the original; but it

cannot be an adequate reproduction; it cannot be the same thing in another language, producing the same effect on the mind. And the cause lies deep in the nature of poetry. "Melody," as Beethoven said to Bettina, "gives a *sensuous existence to poetry;* for does not the meaning of a poem become embodied in melody?" The meanings of a poem and the meanings of the individual words may be reproduced; but in a poem meaning and form are as indissoluble as soul and body; and the form cannot be reproduced. The effect of poetry is a compound of music and suggestion; this music and this suggestion are intermingled in words, which to alter is to alter the effect. For words in poetry are not, as in prose, simple representatives of objects and ideas: they are parts of an organic whole—they are tones in the harmony; substitute *other* parts, and the result is a monstrosity, as when an arm is substituted for a wing; substitute *other* tones or semitones, and you produce a discord. Words have their music and their shades of meaning too delicate for accurate reproduction in any other form; the suggestiveness of one word cannot be conveyed by another. Now all translation is of necessity a substitution of one word for another: the substitute may express the meaning, but it cannot accurately reproduce the music, nor those precise shades of suggestiveness on which the delicacy and beauty of the original depend. Words are not only symbols of objects, but centres of associations; and their suggestiveness depends partly on their sound. Thus there is not the slightest difference in the meaning expressed when I say

> The dews of night began to fall.

or

> The nightly dews commenced to fall.

Meaning and metre are the same; but one is poetry, the other prose. Wordsworth paints a landscape in this line:

The river wanders at its own sweet will.

Let us translate it into other words:

The river runneth free from all restraint.

We preserve the meaning, but where is the landscape? Or we may turn it thus:

The river flows, now here, now there, at will.

which is a very close translation, much closer than any usually found in a foreign language, where indeed it would in all probability assume some such form as this:

The river self-impelled pursues its course.

In these examples we have what is seldom found in translations, accuracy of meaning expressed in similar metre; yet the music and the poetry are gone; because the music and the poetry are organically dependent on certain peculiar arrangements of sound and suggestion. Walter Scott speaks of the verse of an old ballad which haunted his boyhood; it is this:

The dews of night began to fall;
The moon, sweet regent of the sky,
Silvered the walls of Cumnor Hall,
And many an oak that grew thereby.

This verse we will rearrange as a translator would rearrange it:

The nightly dews commenced to fall;
The moon, whose empire is the sky,
Shone on the sides of Cumnor Hall,
And all the oaks that stood thereby.

Here is a verse which certainly would never have haunted any one; and yet upon what apparently slight variations the difference of effect depends! The meaning, metre, rhymes, and

most of the words, are the same; yet the difference in the result is infinite. Let us translate it a little more freely:

Sweetly did fall the dews of night;
The moon, of heaven the lovely queen,
On Cumnor Hall shone silver bright,
And glanced the oaks' broad boughs between.

I appeal to the reader's experience whether this is not a translation which in another language would pass for excellent; and nevertheless it is not more like the original than a wax rose is like a garden rose. To conclude these illustrations, I will give one which may serve to bring into relief the havoc made by translators who adopt a *different* metre from that of the original. Wordsworth begins his famous Ode:

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The translator, fully possessed with the sense of the passage, makes no *mistakes*, but adopting another metre, we will suppose, paraphrases it thus:

A time there was when wood, and stream, and field,
The earth, and every common sight, did yield
To me a pure and heavenly delight,
Such as is seen in dream and vision bright.
That time is past; no longer can I see
The things which charmed my youthful reverie.

These are specimens of translating from English into English,

and show what effects are produced by a change of music and a change of suggestion. It is clear that in a foreign language the music must incessantly be changed, and as no complex words are precisely equivalent in two languages, the suggestions must also be different. Idioms are of course untranslateable. Felicities of expression are the idioms of the poet; but as on the one hand these felicities are essential to the poem, and on the other hand untranslateable, the vanity of translation becomes apparent. I do not say that a translator cannot produce a fine poem in imitation of an original poem; but I utterly disbelieve in the possibility of his giving us a work which can be to us what the original is to those who read it. If, therefore, we reflect what a poem *Faust* is, and that it contains almost every variety of style and metre, it will be tolerably evident that no one unacquainted with the original can form an *adequate* idea of it from translation;* and if this is true, it will explain why Charles Lamb should prefer Marlowe's *Faustus*, and why many other readers should speak slightingly of the *Faust*.†

As useful memoranda for comparison, I will here analyse Marlowe's *Faustus* and Calderon's *El Magico*.

Doctor Faustus has many magnificent passages, such as Marlowe of the "mighty line" could not fail to write; but on the whole it is wearisome, vulgar, and ill-conceived. The lowest buffoonery, destitute of wit, fills a large portion of the scenes; and the serious parts want dramatic evolution. There

* "Goethe's poems," said Beethoven, "exercise a great sway over me, not only by their meaning, but by their rhythm also. It is a language which urges me on to composition."

† The English reader would perhaps best succeed who should first read Dr. Anster's brilliant paraphrase, and then carefully go through Hayward's prose translation. Of the poetical translations, Blackie's is the best and closest I have seen, and it has valuable notes. If *one* version is to be chosen, Hayward's will perhaps be the best.

is no character well drawn. The melancholy figure of Mephistopholis has a certain grandeur, but he is not the Tempter, according to the common conception, creeping to his purpose with the cunning of the serpent; nor is he the cold, ironical, "spirit that denies"; he is more like the Satan of Byron, with a touch of piety and much repentance. The language he addresses to Faustus is such as would rather frighten than seduce him:

Faust. Did not my conjuring raise thee? speak!
Meph. That was the cause, but yet *per accidens;*
For when we hear one racke the name of God,
Abjure the Scripture and his Saviour Christ,
We fly, in hope to get his glorious soul:
Nor will we come unless he use such means,
Whereby he is in danger to be damn'd.
Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring
Is stoutly to abjure all godliness,
And pray devoutly to the Prince of Hell.
Faust. So Faustus hath already done, and holds this principle,
There is no chief but only Belzebub;
To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself.
This word damnation terrifies not me,
For I confound hell in elysium;
My ghost be with the old philosophers.
But, leaving these vain trifles of men's souls,
Tell me, what is that Lucifer thy Lord?
Meph. Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.
Faust. Was not that Lucifer an angel once?
Meph. Yes, Faustus, and most dearly loved of God.
Faust. How comes it, then, that he is prince of devils?
Meph. Oh! by aspiring pride and insolence,
For which God threw him from the face of heaven.
Faust. And what are you that live with Lucifer?
Meph. Unhappy spirits, that live with Lucifer,
Conspired against our God with Lucifer,
And are for ever damn'd with Lucifer.
Faust. Where are you damn'd?
Meph. In hell.

Faust. How comes it, then, that thou art out of hell?
Meph. Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it.
Think'st thou that I, that saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?
Oh, Faustus! leave these frivolous demands,
Which strike a terror to my fainting heart.

Is this the language of the Tempter?—is it even the language of the fallen Lucifer? It is the language of the poet, interpreting what the audience would feel in Satan's place, not what Satan feels. The same want of character-painting is felt throughout the play.

But we have to deal with the philosophical rather than with the dramatic treatment of the subject. The reader who opens *Faustus* under the impression that he is about to see a philosophical subject treated philosophically, will have mistaken both the character of Marlowe's genius and of Marlowe's epoch. *Faustus* is no more philosophical in intention than the *Jew of Malta,* or *Tamburlaine the Great.* It is simply the theatrical treatment of a popular legend,—a legend admirably characteristic of the spirit of those ages in which men, believing in the agency of the devil, would willingly have bartered their future existence for the satisfaction of present desires. Here undoubtedly is a philosophical problem, which even in the present day is constantly presenting itself to the speculative mind. Yes, even in the present day, since human nature does not change: forms only change, the spirit remains; nothing perishes,—it only manifests itself differently. Men, it is true, no longer believe in the devil's agency; at least they no longer believe in the power of calling up the devil and transacting business with him; otherwise there would be hundreds of such stories as that of Faust. But the spirit which created that

story and rendered it credible to all Europe remains unchanged. The sacrifice of the future to the present is the spirit of that legend. The blindness to consequences caused by the imperiousness of desire; the recklessness with which inevitable and terrible results are braved in perfect consciousness of their being inevitable, provided that a temporary pleasure can be obtained, is the spirit which dictated Faust's barter of his soul, which daily dictates the barter of men's souls. We do not make compacts, but we throw away our lives; we have no Tempter face to face with us, offering illimitable power in exchange for our futurity; but we have our own Desires, imperious, insidious, and for them we barter our existence,—for one moment's pleasure risking years of anguish.

The story of Faustus suggests many modes of philosophical treatment, but Marlowe has not availed himself of any: he has taken the popular view of the legend, and given his hero the vulgarest motives. This is not meant as a criticism, but as a statement. I am not sure that Marlowe was wrong in so treating his subject; I am only sure that he treated it so. Faustus is disappointed with logic, because it teaches him nothing but debate,—with physic, because he cannot with it bring dead men back to life,—with law, because it concerns only the "external trash",—and with divinity, because it teaches that the reward of sin is death, and that we are all sinners. Seeing advantage in none of these studies he takes to necromancy; there he finds content; and how?

> *Faust.* How am I glutted with conceit of this!
> Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please?
> Resolve me of all ambiguities?
> Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
> I'll have them fly to India for gold,
> Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
> And search all corners of the new-found world

For pleasant fruits and princely delicates.
I'll have them read me strange philosophy;
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings:
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg:
I'll have them fill the public schools with skill,
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad:
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the prince of Parma from our land,
And reign sole king of all the provinces:
Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war,
Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp bridge,
I'll make my servile spirits to invent.

There may in this seem something trivial to modern apprehensions, yet Marlow's audience sympathized with it, having the feelings of an age when witches were burned, when men were commonly supposed to hold communication with infernal spirits, when the price of damnation was present enjoyment. Therefore does Marlowe make his hero say:

Go, bear these tidings to great Lucifer;
Seeing Faustus hath incurr'd eternal death,
By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity,
Say he surrenders up to him his soul,
So he will spare him four and twenty years,
Letting him live in all voluptuousness,
Having thee ever to attend on me,
To give me whatsoever I shall ask,
To tell me whatsoever I demand,
To slay mine enemies, and to aid my friends,
And always be obedient to my will.
Go, and return to mighty Lucifer;
And meet me in my study at midnight,
And then resolve me of thy master's mind.
Meph. I will, Faustus. [*Exit.*
Faust. Had I as many souls as there be stars,
I'd give them all for Mephostophilis.
By him I'll be great emperor of the world,
And make a bridge through the moving air,

To pass the ocean with a band of men;
I'll join the hills that bind the Afric shore,
And make that country continent to Spain,
And both contributary to my crown.
The emperor shall not live but by my leave,
Nor any potentate of Germany,
Now that I have obtain'd what I desired.

The compact signed, Faustus makes use of his power by scampering over the world, performing practical jokes and vulgar incantations,—knocking down the Pope, making horns sprout on the heads of noblemen, cheating a jockey by selling him a horse of straw, and other equally vulgar tricks, which were just the things the audience would have done had it possessed the power. Tired of his buffooneries he calls up the vision of Helen; his rapture at the sight is worth quoting, as a specimen of how Marlowe can write on a fitting occasion:

Enter Helen *again, passing between two Cupids.*

Faust. Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topmost towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss!
Her lips suck forth my soul! see where it flies!
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sack'd;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest:
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
Oh! thou art fairer than the evening air,
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter,
When he appear'd to hapless Semele;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky,
In wanton Arethusa's azure arms;
And none but thou shalt be my paramour.

His last hour now arrives: he is smitten with remorse, like many of his modern imitators, when it is too late; sated with his power he now shudders at the price. After some tragical raving, and powerfully depicted despair, he is carried off by devils. The close is in keeping with the commencement: Faustus is damned because he made the compact. Each part of the bargain is fulfilled; it is a tale of sorcery, and Faustus meets the fate of a sorcerer.

The vulgar conception of this play is partly the fault of Marlowe and partly of his age. It might have been treated quite in conformity with the general belief; it might have been a tale of sorcery, and yet magnificently impressive. What would not Shakspeare have made of it? Nevertheless, we must in justice to Marlowe look also to the state of opinion in his time; and we shall then admit that another and higher mode of treatment would perhaps have been less acceptable to the audience. Had it been metaphysical, they would not have understood it; had the motives of Faustus been more elevated, the audience would not have believed in them. To have saved him at last, would have been to violate the legend, and to outrage their moral sense. For, why should the black arts be unpunished? why should not the sorcerer be damned? The legend was understood in its literal sense, in perfect accordance with the credulity of the audience. The symbolical significance of the legend is entirely a modern creation.

Let us now turn to Calderon's *El Magico Prodigioso,* so often said to have furnished Goethe with the leading idea of his *Faust.* Of all charges made in the literary world, no charge is made more carelessly than that of plagiarism. Rival editors of classical works do not more readily accuse each other of being ignorant of Greek or Latin, than critics accuse poets of plagiarism. Every Dennis shouts, "That's my thunder!" at each

resemblance, however faint; nay, does not content himself with claiming his own property, but is ready to exclaim, "That's my friend's thunder!" As an example of resolute, reckless assertion, take the following statement of a recent writer: "This drama (*El Magico*) is the one upon which Goethe founded his *Faust*. It is curious how *exactly similar are the incidents*. The originals of *Faust*, which certain of our contemporaries have vainly sought, *might be comprised* in this one poem, which is not much inferior in poetical merit and picturesque details to the German masterpiece any more than in grace and beauty." This assertion is positive enough to carry conviction to the mind of the unwary reader. Nevertheless, *Faust* does *not* resemble *El Magico* either in plot, incidents, situations, characters, or in ideas. The *Faustus* of Marlowe has a certain superficial resemblance to the *Faust*, because the same legend is adopted in both; but in *El Magico* the legend is altogether different; the treatment different. Calderon's latest editor, Don Eugenio de Ochoa, is quite puzzled to conceive how the notion of resemblance got into circulation, and gravely declares that it is *enteramente infundada*.

The scene lies in the neighbourhood of Antioch, where, with "glorious festival and song," a temple is being consecrated to Jupiter. Cyprian, a young student, perplexing himself with the dogmas of his religion (polytheism), has retired from the turmoil of the town to enjoy himself in quiet study. Pliny's definition of God is unsatisfactory, and Cyprian is determined on finding a better. A rustling amongst the leaves disturbs him, caused by the demon, who appears in the dress of a cavalier. They commence an argument, Cyprian pointing out the error of polytheism, the demon maintaining its truth. We see that Cyprian has been converted to monotheism—a step towards his conversion to Christianity; and this con-

version operated by the mere force of truth, this change of opinion resulting from an examination of polytheism, was doubtless flattering to Calderon's audience,—a flattery carried to its acmé in the feeble defence of the demon, who on his entrance declares, aside, that Cyprian shall never find the truth. Righteous Catholic poet! Calderon would not let the devil have the best of the argument even for a moment. Instead of the "spirit that denies", he presents us with a malignant fiend, as impotent as he is malignant,—a fiend who acknowledges himself worsted in the argument, and who resolves to conquer by lust the student whom he cannot delude by sophisms. He has power given him to wage enmity against Justina's soul; he will make Justina captivate Cyprian, and with one blow effect two vengeances. We need not point out the dissimilarity between such a fiend, and the fiend Mephistopheles.

Cyprian is left alone to study, but is again interrupted by the quarrel of Lelio and Floro, two of his friends, who, both enamoured of Justina, have resolved to decide their rivalry by the sword. Cyprian parts them, and consents to become arbiter. He then undertakes to visit Justina, in order to ascertain to whom she gives the preference. In this visit he falls in love with her himself. There is an underplot, in which Moscon, Clarin and Libia, according to the usual style of Spanish comedies, parody the actions and sentiments of their masters; I omit it, as well as the other scenes which do not bear on the subject matter of the drama.

Justina, a recent convert to Christianity, is the type of Christian innocence. She rejects Cyprian's love, as she had rejected that of her former admirers. This coldness exasperates him:

> So beautiful she was—and I,
> Between my love and jealousy,

And so convulsed with hope and fear,
Unworthy as it may appear,—
So bitter is the life I live
That, hear me, Hell! I now would give
To thy most detested spirit
My soul, for ever to inherit,
To suffer punishment and pine,
So this woman may be mine.
Hear'st thou, Hell? Dost thou reject it?
My soul is offered.

Demon (unseen). I accept it.

(Tempest, with thunder and lightning.)

In another writer we might pause to remark on the "want of keeping" in making a polytheist address such a prayer to hell; but Calderon is too full of such things to cause surprise at any individual instance. The storm rages,—a ship goes down at sea; the demon enters as a shipwrecked passenger, and says aside:

It was essential to my purposes
To wake a tumult on the sapphire ocean,
That in this unknown form I might at length
Wipe out the blot of the discomfiture
Sustained upon the mountain, and assail
With a new war the soul of Cyprian,
Forging the instruments of his destruction
Even from his love and from his wisdom.

Cyprian addresses words of comfort to him on his misfortune; the demon says it is in vain to hope for comfort, since all is lost that gave life value. He then tells his story; describing, by means of a very transparent equivocation, through which the audience easily saw, the history of his rebellion in heaven and his chastisement. In the course of his narrative he insinuates his power of magic, hoping to awaken in Cyprian's breast a love of the art. Cyprian offers him the hospitality due to a stranger, and they quit the scene.

In their next scene the demon asks Cyprian the reason of his constant melancholy. This is an opportunity for the display of fustian, never let slip by a Spanish dramatist. Cyprian describes his mistress and his passion for her with the volubility of a lover, and the taste of an Ossian. He very circumstantially informs the demon that the "partes que componen a esta divina muger"—the charms which adorn this paragon—are the charms of Aurora, of fleecy clouds and pearly dews, of balmy gales and early roses, of meandering rivulets and glittering stars, of warbling birds and crystal rocks, of laurels and of sunbeams; and so forth through the space of more than fifty lines, in a style to captivate magazine poets, and to make other readers yawn. Having described her, he declares that he is so entranced with this creature as to have entirely forsaken philosophy; he is willing to give away his soul for her. The demon accepts the offer, splits open a rock and shows Justina reclining asleep. Cyprian rushes towards her, but the rock closes again, and the demon demands that the compact shall be signed before the maiden is delivered. Cyprian draws blood from his arm, and with his dagger writes the agreement on some linen. The demon then consents to instruct him in magic, by which, at the expiration of one year, he will be able to possess Justina.

This temptation-scene is very trivial,—feeble in conception and bungling in execution. Remark the gross want of artistic keeping in it: Cyprian had before addressed a vow to hell that he would give his soul for Justina; the demon answered, "I accept it!" Thunder and lightning followed,—effective enough as a melodramatic *coup de théâtre*, utterly useless to the play; for although the demon appears, it is not to make a compact with Cyprian, it is not even to tempt him; it is simply to become acquainted with him, gain his confidence, and *afterwards* tempt him. The time elapses, and the demon then

tempts Cyprian as we have seen. How poor, feeble, and staggering these outlines! What makes the feebleness of this scene stand out still more clearly, is the gross and senseless parody of Clarin, the *gracioso*. Like his master, he too is in love; like his master he offers to sell his soul to the demon, and strikes his nose, that with the blood he may write the compact on his handkerchief.

It is in this temptation-scene, however, that the single point of resemblance occurs between the plays of Calderon and Goethe. It is extremely slight, as everyone will observe; but slight as it is, some critics have made it the basis of their notion of plagiarism. The compact is the point which the legend of St. Cyprian and the legend of Faust have in common. In all other respects the legends differ, and the poems differ. It is curious however to compare the motives of the three heroes, Faustus, Cyprian, and Faust; to compare what each demands in return for his soul; and in this comparison Calderon "shows least bravely"; his hero is the most pitiful of the three.

To return to our analysis: The year's probation has expired, and Cyprian is impatient for his reward. He has learned the arts of necromancy, in which he is almost as proficient as his master; boasts of being able to call the dead from out their graves, and of possessing many other equally wonderful powers. Yet with this science he does nothing, attempts nothing. Of what use then was the year's probation? of what use this necromantic proficiency? Had the question been put to Calderon he would probably have smiled, and answered, "to prolong the play and give it variety,"—a sensible answer from a rapid playwright, but one which ill accords with the modern notion of his being a profound artist. Perhaps it is too much to expect that a man who wrote between one and two hundred plays should have produced one that could be regarded as a

work of art; nor should we have judged him by any higher standard than that of a rapid and effective playwright, had not the Germans been so hyperbolical in criticism, which the English, who seldom read the poet, take for granted must be just.

The demon calls upon the spirits of hell to instil into Justina's mind impure thoughts, so that she may incline to Cyprian. But this could have been done at first, and so have spared Cyprian his year's probation and his necromantic studies,—studies which are never brought to bear upon Justina herself, though undertaken expressly for her conquest. Justina enters in a state of violent agitation: a portion of the scene will serve as a specimen. I borrow from the translation of this scene which appeared in the *Monthly Chronicle*, vi. p. 346.

The demon enters and Justina asks him:

Say if thou a phantom art,
Formed by terror and dismay?
Dæm. No; but one call'd by the thought
That now rules, with tyrant sway,
O'er thy faltering heart,—a man
Whom compassion hither brought,
That he might point out the way
Whither fled thy Cyprian.
Just. And so shalt thou fail. This storm
Which afflicts my frenzied soul
May imagination form
To its wish, but ne'er shall warm
Reason to its mad control.
Dæm. If thou hast the thought permitted,
Half the sin is almost done!
Wilt thou, since 't is all committed,
Linger ere the joy be won?
Just. In our power abides not thought,
(Thought, alas! how vain to fly);

But the deed is, and 't is one
That we sin in mind have sought,
And another to have done:
I'll not move my foot to try.
Dœm. If a mortal power assail
Justina with all its might,
Say will not the victory fail
When thy wish will not avail,
But inclines thee in despite?
Just. By opposing to thee now
My free will and liberty.
Dœm. To my power they soon shall bow.
Just. If it could such power avow,
Would our free will then be free?
Dœm. Come, 'tis bliss that thou wilt prove.
Just. Dearly would I gain it so.
Dœm. It is peace, and calm, and love. *(Draws, but cannot*
Just. It is misery, death, despair! *move her.)*
Dœm. Heavenly joy!
Just. 'Tis bitter woe!
Dœm. Lost and shamed, forsaken one!
Who in thy defence shall dare?
Just. My defence is God alone.
Dœm. Virgin, virgin, thou hast won! *(Loosens his hold.)*

How delighted must the audience have been at this victory over the demon, by the mere announcement of a faith in God! Unable to give Cyprian the real Justina, the demon determines on deceiving him with a phantom. A figure enveloped in a cloak appears, and bids Cyprian follow. In the next scene Cyprian enters with the fancied Justina in his arms. In his transport he takes off the cloak, and instead of Justina discovers a Skeleton, who replies to his exclamation of horror:—

Así, Cipriano, son
Todas las glorias del mundo!

"Such are the glories of this world,"—a truly Catholic sentiment! In this terrific situation we recognize Calderon the

inquisitor, and Calderon the playwright, but Calderon the artist we do not recognize. As a piece of stage effect this skeleton is powerfully conceived; as a religious warning it is equally powerful; as art it is detestable. It is a fine situation, though he has used it twice elsewhere; but the consistency of the play is violated by it. If the demon wished to seduce Cyprian, would he have attempted to do so by *such* means? No. But Calderon here, as elsewhere, sacrifices everything to a *coup de théâtre*.

Cyprian, exasperated at the deception, demands an explanation. The demon confesses that he is unable to force Justina, as she is under the protection of a superior power. Cyprian asks who that power is. The demon hesitates, but is at length obliged to own that it is the God of the Christians. Cyprian seeing that God protects those who believe in him, refuses to own allegiance to any other. The demon is furious, and demands Cyprian's soul, who contends that the demon has not fulfilled his share of the compact. Words run high: Cyprian draws his sword and stabs the demon, of course without avail, —another stage effect. The demon drags him away, but, like Justina, he calls God to his aid, and the demon rushes off discomfited.

Cyprian becomes a Christian, and Justina assures him of his salvation in spite of his sins, for—

> . . . . no tiene
> Tantas estrellas el ciclo,
> Tantas arenas el mar,
> Tantas centellas el fuego,
> Tantos átomes el dia,
> Como él perdona pecados.

Justina and Cyprian are condemned as heretics and burned at Antioch, martyrs of the Christian faith. The demon appears

riding on a serpent in the air, and addresses the audience, telling them that God has forced him to declare the innocence of Justina and the freedom of Cyprian from his rash engagement. Both now repose in the realms of the blessed.

These analyses will enable the reader to perceive how Marlowe and Calderon have treated the old story, each in a spirit conformable to his genius and his age; the one presenting a legend in its naïveté, the other a legend as the vehicle for religious instruction. Goethe taking up the legend in an age when the naïve belief could no longer be accepted, treated it likewise in a way conformable to his genius and his age. The age demanded that it should be no simple legend, but a symbolical legend; not a story to be credited as *fact*, but a story to be credited as *representative* of fact; for although the rudest intellect would reject the notion of any such actual compact with Satan, the rudest and the loftiest would see in that compact a symbol of their own desires and struggles.

To prove that this is no *ex post facto* explanation, suggested to suit Goethe's poem, I need only refer to the numerous attempts (such as those of Lessing, Maler Müller, Lenau, and Bailey's *Festus*) to fuse a modern spirit into the old myth. In each of these the symbolical meaning is the vital principle of the poem; the meaning of course taking its direction from each individual mind. Lessing's attempt is but a fragment; the works of Lenau and Bailey are too well known to warrant analysis here; but Maler Müller's play, as less known, may be briefly described.

The scene is that of a Gothic church in ruins. The demons are assembled. Lucifer speaks sarcastically of the weakness and meanness of the age: there are now no great crimes committed, no great men to seduce; everything is vulgar, commonplace, mediocre; vice is common, but crime is rare. Lu-

cifer complains of this monotony; Mogol, the demon of money, complains also that he has no longer rivers of gold to pour into the lap of one man who would make good use of it; men calculate, save, and amass treasures penny by penny; the largest sums fall into the hands of the judges and of mothers who sell their daughters. Cacal, the demon of voluptuousness, declares his intention of quitting the world where he has no longer any employment. A woman deceives her husband, a lover seduces a girl, luxury enters into every house, runs in every vein, and men sin and damn themselves without the devil's aid. Atoti, the master of literature, then arrives, almost stupified with the bad verses, pompous harangues, and ridiculous phrases he has heard,—disgusted with the clamours of authors who by turns flatter and decry each other, who place crowns upon their own heads, call themselves men of genius, bestow on each other patents of immortality, and finally sink to sleep upon the very works with which they have made their readers sleep. Lucifer sighs to think of the state of the world; but Mephistopheles re-assures him, and promises to bring him a man who is really great, Dr. Faust. Lucifer awaits the fulfilment of this promise, threatening to abdicate his throne if it be not fulfilled. Mephistopheles takes with him a troop of demons, and departs in quest of Faust.

The satire of this prologue is very transparent and very trivial; it is neither the artlessness of mediæval feeling, nor the searching, cutting satire, which finds the seat of disease and extirpates it:—amusing enough to read once, it is the sort of thing which might be written by many a man of talent in the course of an hour.

Faust dwells in Ingolstadt, where he is much renowned for his science, but little for his conduct. The students have profound respect for him, but the tradespeople refuse him

credit. Knellius, whom he has humiliated by his superiority—Knellius the proud, cowardly, envious pedant—has roused against him a troop of Jews, workmen, and vagabonds. Faust is accused of being about to become bankrupt: the usurers come to demand of him the capital and interest of the sums they have lent him; the workmen demand payment for what they have done for him; and Knellius is at the head of them, inciting and encouraging them. During this time Faust is gambling in a wine-cellar: he has already lost the greater part of his property; he stakes the whole on a single throw, and loses. A tempest rages without; the cries of the multitude pursuing Faust are now heard. The gamblers fly; Faust remains alone, furious and despairing. A voice speaks to him from the air. "I extinguish the light," says Faust, "and speak with you in darkness. If you are a friend, prove it to me; if not, remain in hell."

A curtain is raised, and discovers various sacks of gold and silver. The voice says, "I give to my friend the wealth of this world."—"Is that true?" asks Faust. Another curtain is raised, and discovers crowns, sceptres, and orders of nobility. "The grandeurs of this world to him I befriend!" exclaims the voice. A third curtain is raised, and discovers groups of lovely girls dancing together to soft music. The voice again speaks, "The joys of this world to him who belongs to me!" There is one joy remaining, Faust remarks, whereupon another curtain is raised, and discovers a library, with a bust of Faust crowned with a laurel wreath.

The Voice. Honour and fame to those who follow me!

Faust. Where am I? Is this reality or fancy? Yes, it was reality; I feel it by the impression still remaining. Oh how those pictures entranced me! how I long to possess them! I am his who showed them to me. Let him come therefore! Come, powerful spirit, if thou canst satisfy my desires! Come! I call thee!

Mephistopheles appears; the doors are burst in by the crowd in pursuit of Faust. The demon gives Faust a book, and this book carries him away through the air.

We need go no further to show what Maler Müller's play is like. Clever it certainly is,—effective in many places; but no poem worthy of a second perusal, much less of a twentieth. It is the production of a clever man, not of a genius; just what hundreds of men could have written, all confident that it was more poetical than Goethe's.

To adapt the legend to his age, therefore, Goethe was forced to treat it symbolically, and his own genius gave the peculiar direction to that treatment. We shall see in the Second Part, how his waning vigour sought inspiration more in symbolism than in poetry, more in reflection than in emotion; but for the present, confining ourselves to the First Part, we note in his treatment a marvellous mingling of the legendary and the symbolical, of the mediæval and the modern. The depth of wisdom, the exquisite poetry, the clear bright painting, the wit, humour, and pathos, every reader will distinguish; and if this chapter were not already too long, I should be glad to linger over many details, but must now content myself with the briefest indication of the general aspects of the poem. And first of the main theme: "The intended theme of Faust", says Coleridge, "is the consequences of a misology or hatred and depreciation of knowledge caused by an originally intense thirst for knowledge baffled. But a love of knowledge for itself and for pure ends would never produce such a misology, but only a love of it for base and unworthy purposes." Having stated this to be the theme, Coleridge thus criticizes the execution: "There is neither causation nor proportion in Faust; he is a ready-made conjuror from the beginning; the *incredulus odi* is felt from the first line. The sensuality and thirst after

knowledge are unconnected with each other."* Here we have an example of that criticism before alluded to, which imposes the conceptions of the critic as the true end and aim of the artist. Coleridge had formed the plan of a Faust of his own, and blames Goethe for not treating the topic in the way Coleridge conceived it should be treated. A closer scrutiny would have convinced him that misology is not the intended theme. After the two first scenes knowledge is never mentioned; misology is exhausted as a topic in the initial stages of the work. And what says Goethe himself? "The marionnette fable of Faust murmured with *many voices* in my soul. I too had wandered into every department of knowledge, and had returned early enough satisfied with the vanity of science. And life, too, I had tried under various aspects, and always came back sorrowing and unsatisfied." Here, if anywhere, we have the key to *Faust*. It is a reflex of the struggles of his soul. Experience had taught him the vanity of philosophy; experience had early taught him to detect the corruption underlying civilization, the dark undercurrents of crime concealed beneath smooth outward conformity. If then we distinguish for a moment one of the two aspects of the poem—if we set aside the picture, to consider only the problem—we come to the conclusion that the theme of *Faust* is the apotheosis of scepticism, the cry of despair over the nothingness of life. Misology forms a portion, but only a portion of the theme. Baffled in his attempts to penetrate the *mystery* of Life, Faust yields himself to the Tempter, who promises that he shall penetrate the *enjoyment* of Life. He runs the round of pleasure, as he had run the round of science, and fails. The orgies of Auerbach's cellar, the fancies of the Blocksberg, are unable to satisfy his cravings. The passion he feels for Gret-

* *Table Talk*, vol. II, p. 114.

chen is vehement, but feverish, transitory; she has no power to make him say to the passing moment, "Stay, thou art fair." He is restless because he seeks,—seeks the Absolute, which can never be found. This is the doom of humanity:

Es irrt der Mensch so lang' er strebt.

One word in conclusion. It has been said reproachfully that in *Faust* the problem is stated but not solved. I do not think this reproach valid, because I do not think a poem was the fit vehicle for a solution. Poems are not Systems; the Lyre is not a Pulpit. When the Singer becomes a Demonstrator, he abdicates his proper office, to bungle in the performance of another. But very noticeable it is that Goethe, who has so clearly stated the problem, has also, both practically, in his life, and theoretically, in his writings, given us the nearest approach to a solution by showing how the "heavy and the weary weight" of this great burden may be wisely borne. His doctrine of Renunciation—*dass wir entsagen müssen*—applied by him with fertile results in so many directions, both in Life and Theory, will be found to approach a solution, or at any rate to leave the insoluble mystery without its perplexing and tormenting influence. Activity and sincerity carry us far, if we begin by Renunciation, if we at the outset content ourselves with the Knowable and Attainable, and give up the wild impatience of desire for the Unknowable and Unattainable. The mystery of existence is an awful problem, but it *is* a mystery, and placed beyond the boundaries of human faculty. Recognize it as such, and renounce! Knowledge can only be relative, never absolute. But this relative knowledge is infinite, and to us infinitely important: in that wide sphere let each work according to ability. Happiness, ideal and absolute, is equally unattainable: renounce it! The sphere of active Duty is wide,

sufficing, ennobling to all who strenuously work in it. In the very sweat of labour there is stimulus which gives energy to life; and a consciousness that our labour tends in some way to the lasting benefit of others makes the rolling years endurable.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LYRICAL POEMS.

THE *Faust* and the Lyrics suffice to give Goethe pre-eminence among the poets of modern times, Shakspeare excepted; and had they stood alone as representatives of his genius, no one would ever have disputed his rank. But he has given the world many other works: in other words, he has thrown open many avenues through which the citadel of his fame may be reached. His fame is lessened by his wealth; the fact of his doing so much, has lessened the belief in his power; for as the strength of a beam is measured by its weakest part, so, but unjustly, are poets tested by their weakest works, whenever enthusiasm does not drown criticism. Thus does mere wealth endanger reputation; for when many targets are ranged side by side, the clumsiest archer will succeed in striking one; and that writer has the best chance with the critics who presents the smallest surface. Greek Literature is so grand to us mainly because it is the fragment of fragments; the masterpieces have survived, and no failures are left to bear counterwitness. Our own contemporary Literature seems so poor to us, not because there are no good books, but because there are so many bad, that even the good are hidden behind the mass of mediocrity which obtrudes itself upon the eye.

Goethe has written forty volumes on widely different subjects. He has written with a perfection no German ever achieved before, and he has also written with a feebleness which it would be gratifying to think no German would ever emulate again. But the weak pages are prose. In verse he is always a *singer;* even the poorest poems have something of that grace which captivates in his finest. The gift of Song, which is the especial gift of the poet, and which no other talents can replace, makes his trifles pleasant, and his best lyrics matchless.

The lyrics are the best known of his works, and have by their witchery gained the admiration even of antagonists. One hears very strange opinions about him and his works; but one never hears anything except praise of the minor poems. They are instinct with life and beauty, against which no prejudice can stand. They give musical form to feelings the most various, and to feelings that are *true.* They are gay, coquettish, playful, tender, passionate, mournful, reflective, and picturesque; now simple as the "tune which beats time to nothing in your head", now laden with weighty thought; at one moment reflecting with ethereal grace the whim and fancy of caprice, at another sobbing forth the sorrows which press a cry from the heart. "These songs," says Heine, himself a master of song, "have a playful witchery which is inexpressible. The harmonious verses wind round your heart like a tender mistress. The Word embraces you while the Thought imprints a kiss."*

Part of this witchery is the sincerity of the style. It does not, as in most poets, move between epigrams and effects, startling with metaphors which, although beautiful, seldom

* "Die harmonischen Verse umschlingen dein Herz wie eine zärtliche Geliebte; das Wort umarmt dich, während der Gedanke dich küsst."

express the real meaning they are sought to adorn. It opens itself like a flower, with unpretending grace, and with such variety as lies in the nature of the subject. There is no "ornament" in it. The beauties which it reveals are organic, they form part and parcel of the very tissue of the poem, and are not added as ornaments. Read, for example, the ballad of the *Fisherman* (translated vol. I, p. 367). How simple and direct the images; and yet how marvellously pictorial. Turning to a totally different poem, the *Bride of Corinth*, what can surpass the directness with which every word indicates the mysterious and terrible situation; every line is as a fresh page in the narrative, so rapidly and yet so gradually unfolded. A young man arrives at Corinth from Athens, to seek the bride whom his and her parents have destined for him. Since that agreement of the parents her family has turned Christian; and "when a new faith is adopted, love and truth are often uprooted like weeds." Ignorant of the change, he arrives. It is late in the night. The household are asleep; but a supper is brought to him in his chamber, and he is left alone. The weary youth has no appetite; he throws himself on his bed without undressing. As he falls into a doze the door opens, and by the light of his lamp he sees a strange guest enter—a maiden veiled, clothed in white, about her brow a black and gold band. On seeing him, she raises a white hand in terror. She is about to fly, but he entreats her to stay—points to the banquet, and bids her sit beside him and taste the joys of the gods, Bacchus, Ceres, and Amor. But she tells him she belongs no more to joy; the gods have departed from that silent house where One alone in Heaven, and One upon the Cross, are adored; no sacrifices of Lamb or Ox are made, the sacrifice is that of a human life. This is a language the young pagan understands not. He claims her as his bride. She tells

him she has been sent into a cloister. He will hear nothing. Midnight—the spectral hour—sounds; and she seems at her ease. She drinks the purple wine with her white lips, but refuses the bread he offers. She gives him a golden chain, and takes in return a lock of his air. She tells him she is cold as ice, but he believes that Love will warm her, even if she be sent from the grave:

> Wechselhauch und Kuss!
> Liebesüberfluss!
> Brennst du nicht und fühlest mich entbrannt?

Love draws them together; eagerly she catches the fire from his lips, and each is conscious of existence only in the other; but although the vampire bride is warmed by his love, no heart beats in her breast. It is impossible to describe the weird voluptuousness of this strange scene; this union of Life and Death; this altar of Hymen erected on the tomb. It is interrupted by the presence of the mother, who, hearing voices in the bridegroom's room, and the kiss of the lovers mingling with the cockcrow, angrily enters to upbraid her slave, whom she supposes to be with the bridegroom. She enters angry "and sees—God! she sees her own child!" The vampire rises like a Shadow, and reproaches her mother for having disturbed her. "Was it not enough that you sent me to an early grave?" she asks. But the grave could not contain her: the psalms of priests—the blessings of priests had no power over her; earth itself is unable to stifle Love. She has come; she has sucked the blood from her bridegroom's heart; she has given him her chain and received the lock of his hair. To-morrow he will be grey; his youth he must seek once more in the tomb. She bids her mother prepare the funeral pyre, open her coffin, and burn the bodies of her bridegroom and herself, that they together may hasten to the gods.

In the whole of this wondrous ballad there is not a single image. Everything is told in the most direct and simple style. Everything stands before the eye like reality. The same may be said of the well-known *Gott und die Bajadere*, which is, as it were, the inverse of the *Bride of Corinth*. The Indian god passing along the banks of the Ganges is invited by the Bajadere to enter her hut, and repose himself. She coquettes with him, and lures him with the wiles of her caste. The god smiles and sees with joy, in the depths of her degradation, a pure human heart. He gains her love; but, to put her to the severest proof, he makes her pass through

Lust und Entsetzen und grimmige Pein.

She awakes in the morning to find him dead by her side. In an agony of tears she tries in vain to awaken him. The solemn, awful sounds of the priests chaunting the requiem break on her ear. She follows his corpse to the pyre, but the priests drive her away; she was not his wife; she has no claim to die with him. But Passion is triumphant; she springs into the flames, and the god rises from them with the rescued one in his arms.

The effect of the changing rhythm of this poem, changing from tender lightness to solemn seriousness, and the art with which the whole series of events is unfolded in successive pictures, are what no other German poet has ever attained. The same art is noticeable in the *Erl King*, known to every reader through Schubert's music, if through no other source. The father riding through the night, holding his son warm to his breast; the child's terror at the Erl King, whom the father does not see; and the bits of landscape which are introduced in so masterly a way, as explanations on the father's part of

the appearances which frighten the child; thus mingling the natural and supernatural, as well as imagery with narrative: all these are cut with the distinctness of plastic art. The *Erl King* is usually supposed to have been original; but Viehoff, in his *Commentary on Goethe's Poems*, thinks that the poem Herder translated from the Danish *Erlkönigs Tochter* suggested the idea. The verse is the same. The opening line and the concluding line are nearly the same; but the story is different, and none of Goethe's art is to be found in the Danish ballad, which tells simply how Herr Oluf rides to his marriage, and is met on the way by the Erl King's daughter, who invites him to dance with her; he replies that he is unable to stop and dance, for to-morrow is his wedding-day. She offers him golden spurs and a silk shirt, but he still replies, "To-morrow is my wedding-day." She then offers him heaps of gold. "Heaps of gold will I gladly take; but dance I dare not—will not." In anger she strikes him on the heart, and bids him ride to his bride. On reaching home, his mother is aghast at seeing him so pallid. He tells her he has been in the Erl King's country. "And what shall I say to your bride?" "Tell her I am in the wood with my horse and hound." The morning brings the guests, who ask after Herr Oluf. The bride lifts up the scarlet cloak; "there lay Herr Oluf, and he was dead." I have given this analysis of the Danish ballad for the reader to compare with the *Erlkönig:* a comparison which will well illustrate the difference between a legend and a perfect poem.

It is in not the ballads alone, of which three have just been mentioned, that Goethe's superiority is seen. I might go through the two volumes of Lyrics, and write a commentary as long as this Biography, without exhausting so fertile a topic. Indeed his Biography is itself but a commentary on these

poems, which are real expressions of what he has thought and felt:

Spät erklingt was früh erklang,
Glück und Unglück wird Gesang.

Even when, as in the ballads, or in poems such as the exquisite Idyl of *Alexis and Dora*, he is not giving utterance to any personal experience, he is scarcely ever *feigning*. Many of the smaller poems are treasures of wisdom; many are little else than the carollings of a bird "singing of summer in full-throated ease". But one and all are inaccessible through translation; therefore I cannot attempt to give the English reader an idea of them; the German reader has already anticipated me, by studying them in the original.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

SUNSET.

1805 to 1832.

Ὡς εὖ ισθι ὁτι εμοιγε ὁσον αἱ αλλαι αἱ κατα το σωμα ἡδοναι απομαραινονται, τοσουτον αυξονται αἱ περι τους λογους επιθυμιαι τε και ἡδοναι.—PLATO, *Rep.* I, 6.

" Le Temps l'a rendu spectateur."

MAD. DE STAEL.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE BATTLE OF JENA.

THE death of Schiller left him very lonely. It was more than the loss of a friend; it was the loss also of an energetic stimulus which had urged him to production; and in the activity of production he lived an intenser life. During the long laborious years which followed, years of accumulation, of study, of fresh experience, and of varied plans, we shall see him produce works of which many might be proud; but the noonday splendour of his life has passed, and the light which we admire is the calm effulgence of the setting sun.

As if to make him fully aware of his loss, Jacobi came to Weimar; and although the first meeting of the old friends was very pleasant, they soon found the chasm which separated them intellectually, had become wider and wider, as each developed in his own direction. Goethe found that he understood neither Jacobi's ideas nor his language. Jacobi found himself a stranger in the world of his old friend. Alas! this is one of the penalties we pay for progress: we find ourselves severed from the ancient moorings; we find our language is like that

of foreigners to those who once were dear to us, and understood us.

Jacobi departed, leaving him more painfully conscious of the loss he had sustained in losing Schiller's ardent sympathy. During the following month, Gall visited Jena, in the first successful eagerness of propagating his system of Phrenology, which was then a startling novelty. All who acknowledge the very large debt which Physiology and Psychology owe to Gall's labours (which acknowledgment by no means implies an acceptance of the premature, and, in many respects imperfect, system founded on those labours) will be glad to observe that Goethe not only attended Gall's lectures, but in private conversations showed so much sympathy, and such ready appreciation, that Gall visited him in his sick-room, and dissected the brain in his presence, communicating all the new views to which he had been led. Instead of meeting this theory with ridicule, contempt, and the opposition of ancient prejudices—as men of science, no less than men of the world, were and are still wont to meet it—Goethe saw at once the importance of Gall's mode of dissection (since universally adopted), and of his leading views; although he also saw that science was not sufficiently advanced for a correct verdict to be delivered. Gall's doctrine pleased him because it determined the true position of Psychology in the study of man. It pleased him because it connected man with Nature more intimately than was done in the old schools, showing the identity of all mental manifestation in the animal kingdom.*

But these profound and delicate investigations were soon to be interrupted by the roar of cannon. On the 14th of October,

* Gall's assertion that Goethe was born for political Oratory more than for Poetry, has much amused those who know Goethe's dislike of politics; and does not, indeed, seem a very happy hit.

at 7 o'clock in the morning, the thunder of distant artillery alarmed the inhabitants of Weimar. The battle of Jena had begun. Goethe heard the cannon with terrible distinctness; but as it slackened towards noon, he sat down to dinner as usual. Scarcely had he sat down, when the cannon burst over their heads. Immediately the table was cleared. Riemer found him walking up and down the garden. The balls whirled over the house; the bayonets of the Prussians in flight gleamed over the garden wall. The French had planted a few guns on the heights above Weimar, from which they could fire on the town. It was a calm bright day. In the streets everything appeared dead. Everyone had retreated under cover. Now and then the boom of a cannon broke silence; the balls, hissing through the air, occasionally struck a house. The birds were singing sweetly on the esplanade; and the deep repose of nature formed an awful contrast to the violence of war.

In the midst of this awful stillness a few French hussars rode into the city, to ascertain if the enemy were there. Presently a whole troop galloped in. A young officer came to Goethe to assure him that his house would be secure from pillage; it had been selected as the quarters of Marshal Augereau. The young hussar who brought this message was Lili's son! He accompanied him to the palace. Meanwhile several of the troops had made themselves at home in Goethe's house. Many houses were in flames. Cellars were broken open. The pillage began.

Goethe returned from the palace, but without the Marshal, who had not yet arrived. They waited for him till deep in the night. The doors were bolted, and the family retired to rest. About midnight two tirailleurs knocked at the door, and insisted on admittance. In vain they were told the house was full, and the Marshal expected. They threatened to break in

the windows, if the door were not opened. They were admitted. Wine was set before them, which they drank like troopers, and then they insisted on seeing their host. They were told he was in bed. No matter; he must get up; they had a fancy to see him. In such cases, resistance is futile. Riemer went up and told Goethe, who, putting on his dressing-gown, came majestically down stairs, and by his presence considerably awed his drunken guests, who were as polite as French soldiers can be when they please. They talked to him; made him drink with them, with friendly clink of glasses; and suffered him to retire once more to his room. In a little while, however, heated with wine, they insisted on a bed. The other troopers were glad of the floor; but these two would have nothing less than a bed. They stumbled up stairs; broke into Goethe's room, and there a struggle ensued, which had a very serious aspect. Christiane, who throughout displayed great courage and presence of mind, procured a rescue, and the intruders were finally dragged from the room. They then threw themselves on the bed kept for the Marshal; and no threats would move them. In the morning the Marshal arrived, and sentinels protected the house.

Other, and more fearful, scenes were terrifying Weimar. The pillage was prolonged, so that even the palace was almost stripped of the necessaries of life. In this extremity, while houses were in flames close to the palace, the Duchess Luise manifested that dauntless courage which has never been forgotten, and which produced a profound impression on Napoleon, as he entered Weimar, surrounded by all the terrors of conquest, and was received at the top of the palace stairs by her,—calm, dignified, unmoved. *Voilà une femme à laquelle même nos deux cent canons n'ont pu faire peur!* he said to Rapp. She pleaded for her people; vindicated her husband;

and by her constancy and courage prevailed over the conqueror, who was deeply incensed with the Duke, and repeatedly taunted him with the fact that he spared him solely out of respect for the Duchess.

The rage of Napoleon against the Duke was as unwise as it was intemperate; but I do not allude to it for the purpose of showing how petty the great conqueror could be; I allude to it for the purpose of quoting the characteristic outburst which it drew from Goethe. "Formed by nature to be a calm and impartial spectator of events, even I am exasperated," said Goethe to Falk, "when I see men required to perform the impossible. That the Duke assists wounded Prussian officers robbed of their pay; that he lent the lion-hearted Blücher four thousand dollars after the battle of Lübeck—that is what you call a conspiracy!—that seems to you a fit subject for reproach and accusation! Let us suppose that to-day misfortune befalls the grand army; what would a general or a field-marshal be worth in the Emperor's eyes, who would act precisely as our Duke has acted under these circumstances? I tell you the Duke *shall* act as he acts! He *must* act so! He would do great injustice if he ever acted otherwise! Yes; and even were he thus to lose country and subjects, crown and sceptre, like his ancestor, the unfortunate John; yet must he not deviate one hand's breadth from his noble manner of thinking, and from that which the duty of a man and a prince prescribes in the emergency. Misfortune! What is misfortune? This is a misfortune—that a prince should be compelled to endure such things from foreigners. And if it came to the same pass with him as with his ancestor, Duke John; if his ruin were certain and irretrievable, let not that dismay us: we will take our staff in our hands, and accompany our master in adversity, as old Lucas Kranach did; we will never forsake him. The

women and children when they meet us in the villages, will cast down their eyes, and weep, and say to one another, 'That is old Goethe, and the former Duke of Weimar, whom the French Emperor drove from his throne, because he was so true to his friends in misfortune; because he visited his uncle on his death-bed; because he would not let his old comrades and brothers in arms starve!'

"At this," adds Falk, "the tears rolled in streams down his cheeks. After a pause, having recovered himself a little, he continued: 'I will sing for bread! I will turn strolling ballad singer, and put our misfortunes into verse! I will wander into every village and into every school wherever the name of Goethe is known; I will chaunt the dishonour of Germany, and the children shall learn the song of our shame till they are men; and thus they shall sing my master upon his throne again, and your's off his!'"

I shall have to recur to this outburst on a future occasion, and will now hasten to the important event which is generally supposed to have been directly occasioned by the perils of the battle of Jena. I mean his marriage.

Since we last caught a glimpse of Christiane Vulpius, some fifteen years have elapsed, in the course of which an unhappy change has taken place. She was then a bright, lively, pleasure-loving girl. Years and self-indulgence have now made havoc with her charms. The evil tendency, which youth and animal spirits kept within excess, has asserted itself with a distinctness which her birth and circumstances may explain, if not excuse, but which can only be contemplated in sadness. Her father, we know, ruined himself by intemperance; her brother impaired fine talents by similar excess; and Christiane, who inherited the fatal disposition, was not saved from it by the checks which refined society imposes, for she was shut out

from society by her relation to Goethe. Fond of gaiety, and especially of dancing, she was often seen at the students' balls at Jena; and she accustomed herself to an indulgence in wine, which rapidly destroyed her beauty, and which was sometimes the cause of serious domestic troubles. I would fain have passed over this episode in silence; but it is too generally known to be ignored; and it suggests a tragedy in Goethe's life little suspected by those who saw how calmly he bore himself in public. The mere mention of such a fact at once suggests the conflict of feelings hidden from public gaze; the struggle of indignation with pity, of resolution with weakness. I have discovered but one printed indication of this domestic grief, and that is in a letter from Schiller to Körner, dated 21st Oct. 1800. "On the whole he produces very little now, rich as he still is in invention and execution. His spirit is not sufficiently at ease; his wretched domestic circumstances, which he is too weak to alter, make him so unhappy."

Too weak to alter! Yes, there lies the tragedy, and there the explanation. Tender, and always shrinking from inflicting pain, he had not the sternness necessary to put an end to such a condition. He suffered so much because he could not inflict suffering. To the bystander such endurance seems inexplicable; for the bystander knows not how the insidious first steps are passed over, and how endurance strengthens with repeated trials; he knows not the hopes of a change which check violent resolutions, nor how affection prompts and cherishes such hopes against all evidence. The bystander sees certain broad facts, which are inexplicable to him only because he does not see the many subtle links which bind those facts together; he does not see the mind of the sufferer struggling against a growing evil, and finally resigning itself, and trying to put a calm face on the matter. It is easy for us to say, Why did

not Goethe part from her at once? But parting was not easy. She was the mother of his child; she had been the mistress of his heart, and still was dear to him! To part from her would not have arrested the fatal tendency; it would only have accelerated it. He was too weak to alter his position. He was strong enough to bear it.

And thus the years rolled on. Her many good qualities absolved her few bad qualities. He was sincerely attached to her, and she was devoted to him; and now, in his fifty-eighth year, when the troubles following the battle of Jena made him "feel the necessity of drawing all friends closer," who, among those friends, deserved a nearer place than Christiane? He resolved on marrying her.

It is not known whether this thought of marriage had for some time previous been in contemplation, and was now put in execution when Weimar was too agitated to trouble itself with his doings; or whether the desire of legitimizing his son in these troublous days suggested the idea. Riemer thinks the motive was gratitude for her courageous and prudent conduct during the troubles; but I do not think that explanation acceptable, the more so as, according to her own statement, marriage was proposed in the early years of their acquaintance. In the absence of positive testimony, I am disposed to rely on psychological evidence; and, assuming that the idea of marriage *had* been previously entertained, the delay in execution is explicable when we are made aware of one peculiarity in his nature, namely, a singular hesitation in adopting any decisive course of action—singular, in a man so resolute and imperious when once his decision had been made. This is the weakness of imaginative men. However strong the volition, when once the volition is set going, there is in men of active intellects, and especially in men of imaginative, apprehensive intellects, a fluc-

tuation of motives keeping the volition in abeyance, which practically amounts to weakness; and is only distinguished from weakness by the strength of the volition when let loose. Goethe, who was aware of this peculiarity, used to attribute it to his never having been placed in circumstances which required prompt resolutions, and to his not having educated his will; but I believe the cause lay much deeper, lying in the nature of psychological actions, not in the accidents of education.

But be the cause of the delay this or any other, it is certain that on the 19th of October, *i. e.* five days after the battle of Jena, and *not*, as writers constantly report, "during the cannonade," he was united to Christiane, in the presence of his son, and of his secretary, Riemer.

The scandal which this act of justice excited was immense, as may readily be guessed by those who know the world. His friends, however, loudly applauded his emergence from a false position. From that time forward, no one who did not treat her with proper respect could hope to be well received by him. She bore her new-made honours unobtrusively, and with a quiet good sense, which managed to secure the hearty goodwill of most of those who knew her.

CHAPTER II.

BETTINA AND NAPOLEON.

It is very characteristic that during the terror and the pillage of Weimar, Goethe's greatest anxiety on his own account was lest his scientific manuscripts should be destroyed. Wine, plate, furniture, could be replaced; but to lose his manuscripts was to lose what was irreparable. Herder's posthumous manuscripts *were* destroyed; Meyer lost everything, even his sketches; but Goethe lost nothing.*

The Duke, commanded by Prussia to submit to Napoleon, laid down his arms and returned to Weimar, there to be received with the enthusiastic love of his people, as some compensation for the indignities he had endured. Peace was restored. Weimar breathed again. Goethe availed himself of the quiet to print his *Farbenlehre* and *Faust*, that they might be rescued from any future peril. He also began to meditate once more an epic on William Tell; but the death of the Duchess Amalia on the 10th April drove the subject from his mind.

* It is at once ludicrous and sad to mention that even *this* has been the subject of malevolent sneers against him. His antagonists cannot forgive him the good fortune which saved *his* house from pillage, when the houses of others were ransacked. They seem to think it a mysterious result of his selfish calculations!

On the 23rd of April, Bettina came to Weimar. We must pause awhile to consider this strange figure, who fills a larger space in the literary history of the nineteenth century than any other German woman. Every one knows "the Child" Bettina Brentano,—daughter of the Maximiliane Brentano with whom Goethe flirted at Frankfurt in the Werther days—wife of Achim von Arnim, the fantastic Romanticist—the worshipper of Goethe and Beethoven—for some time the privileged favourite of the King of Prussia—and writer of that wild, but by no means veracious book, *Goethe's Correspondence with a Child.* She is one of those phantasts to whom everything seems permitted. More elf than woman, yet with flashes of genius which light up in splendour whole chapters of nonsense, she defies criticism, and puts every verdict at fault. If you are grave with her, people shrug their shoulders, and saying "she is a Brentano," consider all settled. "At the point where the folly of others ceases the folly of the Brentanos begins," runs the proverb in Germany.

I do not wish to be graver with Bettina than the occasion demands; but while granting fantasy its widest licence, while grateful to her for the many picturesque anecdotes she has preserved from the conversation of Goethe's mother, I must consider the history of her relation to Goethe seriously, because out of it has arisen a charge against his memory which is very false and injurious. Many unsuspecting readers of her book, whatever they may think of the passionate expressions of her love for Goethe, whatever they may think of her demeanour towards him, on first coming into his presence, feel greatly hurt at his coldness; while others are still more indignant with him for keeping alive this mad passion, feeding it with poems and compliments, and doing this out of a selfish calculation, in order that *he might gather from her letters ma-*

terials for his poems! In both these views there is complete misconception of the actual case. True it is that the *Correspondence* furnishes ample evidence for both opinions; and against that evidence there is but one fact to be opposed, but the fact is decisive: the *Correspondence* is a romance.

A harsher phrase would be applied were the offender a man, or not a Brentano, for the romance is put forward as biographical fact; not as fiction playing around and among fact. How much is true, how much exaggeration, and how much pure invention, I am in no position to explain. But Riemer, the old and trusted friend of Goethe, living in the house with him at the time of Bettina's arrival, has shown the *Correspondence* to be a "romance which has only borrowed from reality the time, place, and circumstances;" and from other sources I have learned enough to see both Goethe's conduct and her own in quite a different light from that presented in her work.

A young, ardent, elfin creature worships the great poet at a distance, writes to tell him so, is attentive to his mother, who gladly hears such praises of her son, and is glad to talk of him. He is struck with her extraordinary mind, is grateful to her for the attentions to his mother, and writes as kindly as he can without compromising himself. She comes to Weimar. She falls into his arms and goes to sleep in his lap on their first interview; and is ostentatious of her adoration and her jealousy ever afterwards. This is her own account; and one sees that the position was very embarrassing for Goethe: a man aged fifty-eight worshiped by a girl who, though a woman in years, looked like a child, and worshiped with the extravagance, partly mad and partly wilful, of a Brentano—*what* could he do? He could take a base advantage of her passion; he could sternly repress it; or he could smile at it, and pat her head as one pats a whimsical, amusing child. These three courses were

open to him, and only these. He adopted the last, until she forced him to adopt the second; forced him by the very impetuosity of her adoration. At first the child's coquettish, capricious ways amused him; her bright-glancing intellect interested him; but when her demonstrations became obtrusive and fatiguing, she had to be "called to order" so often, that at last his patience was fairly worn out. The continuance of such a relation was obviously impossible. She gave herself the licence of a child, and would not be treated as a child. She fatigued him.

Riemer relates that during this very visit she complained to him of Goethe's coldness. This coldness, he rightly says, was simply patience; a patience which held out with difficulty against such assaults. Bettina quitted Weimar, to return in 1811, when by her own conduct she gave him a reasonable pretext for breaking off the connexion; a pretext, I am assured, he gladly availed himself of. It was this. She went one day with Goethe's wife to the Exhibition of Art, in which Goethe took great interest; and there her satirical remarks, especially on Heinrich Meyer, offended Christiane, who spoke sharply to her. High words rose, gross insult followed. Goethe took the side of his insulted wife, and forbade Bettina the house. It was in vain that on a subsequent visit to Weimar she begged Goethe to receive her. He was resolute. He had put an end to a relation which could not be a friendship, and was only an embarrassment.*

Such being the real story, as far as I can disentangle it, we have now to examine the authenticity of the *Correspondence*,

* I give this story as it was told me, by an authority quite unexceptionable; nevertheless, in all such narratives there is generally some inaccuracy, even when relating to contemporary events, and the details above given may not be absolutely precise, although the net result certainly is there expressed.

in as far as it gives support to the two charges: 1st, of Goethe's alternate coldness and tenderness; 2d, of his using her letters as material for his poems. That he was ever tender to her, is denied by Riemer, who pertinently asks how we are to believe that the coldness, of which she complained during her visit to Weimar, grew in her absence into the lover-like warmth glowing in the sonnets addressed to her? This is not credible; but the mystery is explained by Riemer's distinct denial that the sonnets were addressed to her. They were *sent* to her, as to other friends; but the poems which she says were inspired by her, addressed to her, were in truth written for another. The proof is very simple. These sonnets were written before she came to Weimar, and had already passed through Riemer's hands, like other works, for his supervision. Riemer moreover knew to *whom* these passionate sonnets were addressed, although he did not choose to name her. I have no such cause for concealment, and simply declare the sonnets to have been addressed to Minna Herzlieb, of whom we shall hear more presently; as indeed the charade on her name, which closes the series, (*Herz-Lieb*) plainly indicates. Not only has Bettina appropriated the sonnets which were composed at Jena while Riemer was with Goethe, and inspired by one living at Jena, but she has also appropriated poems known by Riemer to have been written in 1813-19, she then being the wife of Achim von Arnim, and having since 1811 been resolutely excluded from Goethe's house. To shut your door against a woman, and yet write love verses to her; to respond so coldly to her demonstrations that she complains of it, and yet pour forth sonnets throbbing with passion, is a course of conduct certainly not credible on evidence such as the *Correspondence with a Child.* Hence we are the less surprised to find Riemer declaring that some of her letters are "little more than meta-and-paraphrases of Goethe's

poems, *in which both rhythm and rhyme are still traceable.*" So that instead of Goethe's turning her letters into poems, Riemer accuses her of turning Goethe's poems into her letters. An accusation so public and so explicit—an accusation which ruined the whole authenticity of the *Correspondence*—should at once have been answered. The production of the originals with their post marks might have silenced accusers. But the accusation has been fourteen years before the world, and no answer attempted.

In conclusion, it is but necessary to add, that Bettina's work thus deprived of its authenticity, all those hypotheses which have been built on it respecting Goethe's conduct, fall to the ground. Indeed, when one comes to think of it, the hypothesis of his using her letters as poetic material does seem the wildest of all figments; for not only was he prodigal in invention and inexhaustible in material, but he was especially remarkable for always expressing his own feelings, his own experience, not the feelings and experience of others.

We part here from Bettina; another and very different figure enters on the scene: Napoleon at the Congress of Erfurt. It was in September 1808 that the meeting of the Emperors of France and Russia, with all the minor potentates forming the *cortège*, took place at the little town of Erfurt, a few miles from Weimar. It was a wonderful sight. The theatre was opened with Talma and the Parisian troupe, performing the finest tragedies of France before a parterre of Kings. "Exactly in front of the pit sat the two Emperors, in arm-chairs, in familiar conversation; a little in their rear, the Kings; and then the reigning Princes and hereditary Princes. Nothing was seen in the whole pit but uniforms, stars, and orders. The lower boxes were filled with staff officers and the most distinguished persons of the imperial bureaux. The upper front

with Princesses; and at their sides foreign ladies. A strong guard of grenadiers of the imperial guard was posted at the entrance. On the arrival of either Emperor the drum beat thrice; on that of any King, twice. On one occasion the sentinel, deceived by the outside of the King of Würtemburg's carriage, ordered the triple salute to be given; on which the officer in command cried out, in an angry tone, *Taisez-vous—ce n'est qu'un roi!*"*

Napoleon, on this occasion, gave a friendly reception to the Duke of Weimar, and to Goethe and Wieland, with whom he talked about literature and history. Goethe went to Erfurt on the 29th of September, and that evening saw *Andromaque* performed. On the 30th, there was a grand dinner given by the Duke, and in the evening *Britannicus* was performed. In the *Moniteur* of the 8th of October he is mentioned among the illustrious guests: "Il paraît apprécier parfaitement nos acteurs, et admirer surtout les chefs-d'œuvre qu'ils représentent." On the 2nd of October he was summoned to an audience with the Emperor, and found him at breakfast, Talleyrand and Daru standing by his side; Berthier and Savary behind. Napoleon, after a fixed look, exclaimed: "*Vous êtes un homme;*" a phrase which produced a profound impression on the flattered poet. "How old are you?" asked the Emperor. "Sixty." "You are very well preserved." After a pause—"You have written tragedies?" Here Daru interposed, and spoke with warmth of Goethe's works, adding that he had translated Voltaire's *Mahomet*. "It is not a good piece," said Napoleon, and commenced a critique on *Mahomet*, especially on the unworthy portrait given of that conqueror of a world. He then turned the conversation to *Werther*, which he had read seven times, and which accompanied him to Egypt. "After various re-

* Kanzler von Müller in Mrs. Austin's *Germany from* 1760 *to* 1814, p. 307.

marks, all very just," says Goethe, "he pointed out a passage and asked me why I had written so: it was contrary to nature. This opinion he developed with great clearness. I listened calmly, and smilingly replied that I did not know whether the objection had ever been made before, but that I found it perfectly just. The passage was unnatural; but perhaps the poet might be pardoned for the artifice which enabled him to reach his end in an easier, simpler way. The Emperor seemed satisfied and returned to the drama, and criticized it like a man who has studied the tragic stage with the attention of a criminal judge, and who was keenly alive to the fault of the French in departing from nature. He disapproved of all pieces in which fate played a part. 'Ces pièces appartiennent à une époque obscure. Au reste, que veulent-ils dire avec leur fatalité? La politique est la fatalité'."

The interview lasted nearly an hour. Napoleon inquired after his children and family; was very gracious; and wound up almost every sentence with *qu'en dit M. Goet?* As Goethe left the room, Napoleon repeated to Berthier and Daru, *Voilà un homme!*

A few days after, Napoleon was in Weimar, and great festivities were set on foot to honour him; among them a *chasse* on the battle field of Jena; a grand Ball at Court; and *La Mort de César* at the theatre, with Talma as Brutus. During the ball, Napoleon talked at great length with Goethe and Wieland. Speaking of ancient and modern literature, Napoleon touched on Shakspeare, whom he was too French to comprehend, and said to Goethe: "Je suis étonné qu'un grand esprit, comme vous, n'aime pas les genres tranchés." Goethe might have replied that *les grands esprits* have almost universally been the very reverse of *tranchés;* but of course it was not for him to controvert the Emperor. After speaking mag-

niloquently of tragedy, Napoleon told him he ought to write a *Death of Cæsar*, but in a grander style than the tragedy of Voltaire. "Ce travail pourrait devenir la principale tâche de votre vie. Dans cette tragédie il faudrait montrer au monde comment César aurait pu faire le bonheur de l'humanité si on lui avait laissé le temps d'exécuter ses vastes plans." One cannot help thinking of Goethe's early scheme to write *Julius Cæsar*, and how entirely opposed it would have been to the *genre tranché* so admired by Napoleon.

A proposition more acceptable than that of writing tragedies at his age, was that of accompanying Napoleon to Paris. "Venez à Paris, je l'exige de vous; là vous trouverez un cercle plus vaste pour votre esprit d'observation; là vous trouverez des matières immenses pour vos créations poétiques." He had never seen a great capital like Paris or London, and there was something very tempting in this invitation. F. von Müller says he often spoke with him on the probable expense of the journey, and of the Parisian usages; but the inconvenience of so long a journey (in those days), and his own advanced age, seem to have checked his desire.

On the 14th of October he and Wieland received the cross of the Legion of Honour—then an honour; and the two Emperors quitted Erfurt. Goethe preserved complete silence on all that had passed between him and Napoleon. Indeed when he recorded the interviews, many years later, in the annals of his life, he did so in the most skeleton-like manner. To the oft-repeated question, What was the passage in *Werther* indicated by Napoleon as contrary to Nature, he always returned a playful answer, referring the questioner to the book, on which to exercise his own ingenuity in discovery. He would not even tell Eckermann. He was fond, in this later period of his life, of playing hide-and-seek with readers, and

enjoyed their efforts to unravel mysteries. The present mystery has been cleared up by the Chancellor von Müller, to whom we owe most of the details respecting this Napoleon interview. The objection raised by Napoleon was none other than the objection raised by Herder (see p. 38) when *Werther* was revised by him in 1782,—viz. that Werther's melancholy which leads him to suicide, instead of proceeding solely from frustrated love, is complicated by his frustrated ambition. Herder thought this a fault in art, Napoleon thought it contrary to nature; and, strange to say, Goethe agreed with both, and altered his work in obedience to Herder's criticism, though he forgot all about it when Napoleon once more brought the objection forward. Against Herder, Napoleon, and Goethe himself, it is enough to oppose the simple fact: Werther (*i. e.* Jerusalem) *was* suffering from frustrated ambition, as well as from frustrated love; and what Goethe found him, that he made him. We have only to turn to Kestner's letter, describing Jerusalem and his unhappy story, to see that Goethe, in *Werther*, followed with the utmost fidelity the narrative which was given him.

That he was extremely flattered by the attentions of Napoleon has been the occasion of a loud outcry from those who, having never been subjected to any flattery of this nature, find it very contemptible. But the attentions of a Napoleon were enough to soften in their flattery even the sternness of a republican; and Goethe, no republican, was all his life very susceptible to the gratification which a Frankfurt citizen must feel in receiving the attentions of crowned heads. There is infinite insincerity uttered on this subject; and generally the outcry is loudest from men who would themselves be most dazzled by court favour of any kind. To hear them talk of Goethe's "servility" and worship of rank, one might fancy that

they stood on a moral elevation, looking down upon him with a superior pity which in some sort compensated their inferiority of intellect. There is one anecdote which they are very fond of quoting, and which I will therefore give, that we may calmly consider what is its real significance. Beethoven, writing to Bettina in 1812, when he made Goethe's acquaintance in Töplitz, says: "Kings and princes can to be sure make professors, privy councillors, &c., and confer titles and orders, but they cannot make great men—minds which rise above the common herd—these they must not pretend to make, and therefore must these be held in honour. When two men, such as Goethe and I, come together, even the high and mighty perceive what is to be considered great in men like us. Yesterday, on our way home, we met the whole Imperial Family. We saw them coming from a distance, and Goethe separated from me to stand aside: say what I would, I could not make him advance another step. *I pressed my hat down upon my head, buttoned up my great coat, and walked with folded arms through the thickest of the throng.* Princes and pages formed a line, the Archduke Rudolph took off his hat, and the Empress made the first salutation. Those gentry know me. I saw to my real amusement the procession file past Goethe. He stood aside with his hat off, bending lowly. I rallied him smartly for it; I gave him no quarter."*

This anecdote is usually quoted as evidence of Beethoven's independence and Goethe's servility. A very little consideration will make us aware that Beethoven was ostentatiously rude in the assertion of his independence, and that Goethe was simply acting on the dictates of common courtesy, in standing aside and taking off his hat, as all Germans do when Royalty passes them. It is as much a matter of courtesy to stand still,

* Schindler's *Life of Beethoven*, edited by Moscheles, vol. i, p. 133-5.

and take off the hat, when a Royal personage passes in carriage or on foot, as it is to take off the hat when an acquaintance passes. Beethoven might choose to ignore all such courtesies; indeed his somewhat eccentric nature would not move in conventional orbits; and his disregard of such courtesies might be pardoned as the caprices of an eccentric nature; but Goethe was a man of the world, a man of courtesies, and a minister; to have folded his arms, and pressed down his hat upon his head, would have been a rudeness at variance with his nature, his education, his position, and his sense of propriety.

It is possible, nay probable, that the very education Goethe had received may have given to his salutation a more elaborate air than was noticeable in other bystanders. In bowing, he may have bowed very low, with a certain formality of respect; for I have no wish to deny that he did lay stress on conventional distinctions. Not only was he far from republican sternness, but he placed more value on his star and title of Excellency, than his thorough-going partizans are willing to admit. If that be a weakness, let him be credited with it; but if he were as vain of such puerilities as an English Duke is of the Garter, I do not see any cause for serious reproach in it. So few poets have been Excellencies, so few have worn stars on their breasts, that we have no means of judging whether Goethe's vanity was greater or less than we have a right to expect. Meanwhile it does seem to me that sneers at his title, and epigrams on his star, come with a very bad grace from a nation which is laughed at for nothing more frequently than for its inordinate love of titles. Nor are Englishmen so remarkable for their indifference to rank, and entire freedom from "snobbishness", as to make them the fittest censors of this weakness in a Goethe.

CHAPTER III.

ELECTIVE AFFINITIES.

Among the Jena friends whom Goethe saw with constant pleasure was Frommann, the bookseller, in whose family there was an adopted child, by name Minna Herzlieb, strangely interesting to us as the original of Ottilie in the *Wahlverwandtschaften*. As a child she had been a great pet of Goethe's; growing into womanhood, she exercised a fascination over him which his reason in vain resisted. The disparity of years was great: but how frequently are young girls found bestowing the bloom of their affections on men old enough to be their fathers! and how frequently are men at an advanced age found trembling with the passion of youth! In the Sonnets addressed to her, and in the novel of *Elective Affinities*, may be read the fervour of his passion, and the strength with which he resisted. Speaking of this novel, he says: "No one can fail to recognize in it a deep passionate wound which shrinks from being closed by healing, a heart which dreads to be cured .... In it, as in a burial-urn, I have deposited with deep emotion many a sad experience. The 3rd of October 1809 (when the publication was completed) set me free from the work; but the feelings it embodies can never quite depart from me." If we knew as

much of the circumstances out of which grew the *Elective Affinities* as we do of those out of which grew *Werther*, we should find his experience as clearly embodied in this novel as it is in *Werther;* but conjecture in such cases being perilous, I will not venture beyond the facts which have been placed at my disposal; and may only add therefore that the growing attachment was seen with pain and dismay, for no good issue could be found. At length it was resolved to send Minna to school,* and this absolute separation saved them both.

It is very curious to read *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* by the light of this history, and to see in it not only the sources of its inspiration, but the way in which Goethe dramatizes the two halves of his own character.† Eduard and Charlotte loved each other in youth. Circumstances separated them; and each made a *mariage de convenance* from which, after a time, they were released by death. The widower and the widow, now free to choose, naturally determine on fulfilling the dream of their youth. They marry. At the opening of the story we see them placidly happy. Although a few quiet touches make us aware of a certain organic disparity between them, not enough to create unhappiness, but enough to prevent perfect sympathy, the keenest eye would detect no signs which threatened the enduring stability of their happiness. Eduard has a friend, almost a brother, always called "The Captain", whom he invites to come and live with them. Charlotte has strongly opposed this at first, having a dim presentiment of evil; but she yields, the more so as she desires that her adopted daughter, Ottilie, should now be taken from school, and come to live with them.

Thus are the four actors in the drama brought together on

* In the novel, Ottilie also is sent back to school.

† See what was formerly said on this point, vol. I, p. 219-20.

the stage; and no sooner are they brought together, than the natural *elective affinities* of their natures come into play. Charlotte and the Captain are drawn together; Eduard and Ottilie are drawn together. This is shown to be as inevitable as the chemical combinations which are made to illustrate it. A real episode in the tragedy of life is before us; felt to be inevitable; felt to be terrible; felt also to present a dilemma to the moral judgment, on which two parties will pronounce two opposite opinions.

Those critics who reason about human life, and consequently about Art from the abstract point of view, who, disregarding fact and necessity, treat human nature as a chess-board on which any moves may be made which the player chooses, the player himself being considered an impersonal agent untroubled by rashness, incapable of overlooking what is palpable to the bystanders,—those critics, I say, will unhesitatingly pronounce the situation an immoral situation, which the poet should not have presented, and which in real life would at once have been put an end to by the stern idea of Duty.

Others, again, whose philosophy is evolved from life as it *is*, not as it might be; who accept its wondrous complexity of impulses, and demand that Art should represent reality—look upon this situation as terribly true, and although tragic, by no means immoral; for the tragedy lies in the collision of Passion and Duty,—of Impulse on the one hand, and on the other, of Social Law. Suppose Charlotte and Eduard unmarried, and these "affinities" would have been simple impulses to marriage. But the fact of Marriage stands as a barrier to the impulses: the collision is inevitable.

The divergence of opinion, here indicated, must necessarily exist among the two great classes of readers. Accordingly in Germany and in England the novel is alternately pronounced

immoral and profoundly moral. I do not think it is either the one or the other. When critics rail at it, and declare it saps the whole foundation of marriage, and when critics enthusiastically declare it is profoundly moral because it sets the sacredness of marriage in so clear a light, I see that both have drawn certain general conclusions from an individual case; but I do not see that they have done more than put *their* interpretations on what the author had no intention of being interpreted at all. Every work of Art has its moral, says Hegel; but the *moral depends on him that draws it.* Both the conclusion against marriage, and the conclusion in favour of marriage, may therefore be drawn from this novel; and yet neither conclusion be correct—except as the private interpretation of the reader. Goethe was an Artist, not an Advocate; he painted a true picture, and because he painted it truly, he necessarily presented it in a form which would permit men to draw from it those opposite conclusions which the reality itself would permit. Suppose the story actually to have passed before our eyes, the judgments passed on it even by those thoroughly acquainted with all the facts would have been diametrically opposite. It is not difficult to write a story carrying the moral legible in every page; and if the writer's object be primarily that of illustrating a plain moral, he need not trouble himself about truth of character. And for this reason: he employs character as a *means* to an end, he does not make the delineation of character his end; his purpose is didactic, not artistic. Quite otherwise is the artist's purpose and practice: for him human life is the end and aim; for him the primary object is character, which is, as all know, of a mingled woof, good and evil, virtue and weakness, truth and falsehood, woven inextricably together.

Those who object to such pictures, and think that truth is

no warrant, may reasonably consider Goethe blameable for having chosen the subject. But he chose it because he had experienced it. And once grant him the subject, it is difficult to blame his treatment of it, if we except one scene which to English readers will always be objectionable. Two of the actors represent Passion in its absorbing, reckless, irresistible fervour, rushing onwards to the accomplishment of its aims. The two other actors represent with equal force, and with touching nobleness, the stern idea of Duty. Eduard and Ottilie love rapidly, vehemently, thoughtlessly. Not a doubt troubles them. Their feeling is so natural, it so completely absorbs them, that they are like two children entering on a first affection. But, vividly as they represent Instinct, Charlotte and the Captain as vividly represent Reason; their love is equally profound, but it is the love of two rational beings, who, because they reason, reason on the circumstances in which they are placed; recognize society, its arrangements and its laws; and sacrifice their own desires to this social necessity. They subdue themselves; they face suffering, upheld by Conscience, which dictates to them a line of conduct never dreamt of by the passionate Eduard and Ottilie.

Eduard no sooner knows that he is loved than he is impatient for a divorce (allowable in Germany), which will enable him to marry Ottilie, and enable Charlotte to marry the Captain. Unfortunately Charlotte, who has hitherto had no children by Eduard, feels that she is about to be a mother. This complicates a position which before was comparatively simple. Childless, she might readily have consented to a divorce. She cannot now. Every argument fails to persuade Eduard to relinquish the one purpose of his life; and he only consents to test by absence the durability of his passion.

He joins the army, distinguishes himself in the field, and

returns with passion as imperious as ever. Meanwhile the Captain has also absented himself. Charlotte bears her fate, meekly, nobly. Ottilie in silence cherishes her love for Eduard, and devotes herself with intense affection to Charlotte's child. This child, in accordance with a popular superstition (which, by the way, physiology emphatically discredits), resembles in a striking manner both Ottilie and the Captain, thus physically typifying the passion felt by Eduard for Ottilie, and the passion felt by Charlotte for the Captain.

Charlotte, who feels strong enough to bear her fate, never relinquishes the hope that Eduard will learn to accept his with like fortitude. But he remains immoveable. Opposition only intensifies his desire. At length the child is drowned, while under Ottilie's charge. In the depth of her affliction a light breaks in upon her soul; and now, for the first time, Ottilie becomes conscious of being wrong in her desire to be Eduard's wife. With this consciousness comes a resolution never to be his. The tragedy deepens. She wastes away. Eduard, whose passion was his life, lingers awhile in mute sorrow, and then is laid to rest by her side.

Such, in its leading motives, is the terribly tragic drama which Goethe has worked out with indefatigable minuteness in *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*. The story moves slowly, as in life, through various episodes and circumstances, but if slow, it is always intelligible.

We need only a hint of the origin of this story to read in it how Goethe has represented himself under the two different masks of the impulsive Eduard, and the reasonable strong-willed Captain. These characters are drawn from the life, drawn from himself. Considered only as characters in a novel, they are masterly creations. Eduard—weak, passionate, and impatient—still preserves our interest even in his weakest mo-

ments. How admirable a touch is that where, in the early uneasiness of his position, he hears of the Captain's having criticized his flute playing, and "at once feels himself freed from every obligation of duty"! It is precisely these passionate natures which leap at any excuse, no matter how frivolous, that may give them the semblance of justification. Charlotte and the Captain stand as representatives of Duty and Reason, in contrast with Ottilie and Eduard, who represent Impulse and Superstition; and Goethe has in the two reasonable beings achieved the rare success of making reason loveable. Two nobler characters it would be difficult to name, without going beyond the circle of reality into that of the ideal.

Rosenkrantz has noticed how well the various forms of marriage are represented in this novel. Eduard and Charlotte each tried *mariage de convenance;* they then tried a *marriage of friendship;* if the former was unhappy, the latter was not sufficing: it was not the *marriage of love.* Moreover, in the liaison of the count and the baroness, we see marriage as it is so often found in the world—as a mere convention conventionally respected. Hence the count is painted as a frivolous careless man of fashion, who plays with St. Simonian theories, and thinks marriage ought to be an apprenticeship terminable every five years.

Besides such points, the critic will note admiringly how the characters present themselves in thought, speech, and act, without any description or explanation from the author. The whole representation is so objective, so simple, and the march of the story is so quiet, moving amid such familiar details, that except in the masterpieces of Mrs. Austin, I know not where to look for a comparison. And if English and French readers sometimes feel a little wearied by the many small

details which encumber the march of the story, and irritate the curiosity which is impatient for the dénouement, no such weariness is felt by German readers, who enjoy the details, and the purpose which they are supposed to serve. A dear friend of mine, whose criticism is always worthy of attention, thinks that the long episodes which interrupt the progress of the story during the interval of Eduard's absence and return, are artistic devices for impressing the reader with a sense of the slow movement of life; and, in truth, it is only in fiction that the dénouement usually lies close to the exposition. I give this opinion, for the reader's consideration; but it seems to me more ingenious than just. I must confess that the stress Goethe lays on the improvements of the park, the erection of the moss hut, the restoration of the chapel, the making of new roads, etc., is out of all proportion, and somewhat tedious. The original intention was simply to write a *novelle*, a little tale; and for that there was abundant material. In expanding the *novelle* into a novel, he has spoiled a masterpiece.*

The style of *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* is greatly admired by Germans; Rosenkrantz pronounces it classical. We must remember, however, that Germany is not rich in works written with the perfection which France and England demand; we must remember, moreover, that most German opinions on Goethe are to be received with the same caution as English opinions about Shakspeare; and bearing these two facts in mind, we shall lend a more willing ear to those native critics who do not regard the style of the *Wahlverwandtschaften* as classical. It is a delicate point for a foreigner to venture on

* This novel has been translated and published among Goethe's Tales in Mr. Bohn's *Standard Library*; so that I need not enter into an examination of the episodes, the more so as on such a question the reader's interest, or want of interest, is decisive for him.

an opinion in such a case; and if I wrote for Germans, I should simply quote the current verdict; but writing for Englishmen who read German, there may be less temerity in alluding to the signs of age which the style of this novel betrays. Englishmen comparing this prose with the prose of his earlier works, or with the standard of admirable prose—and so great a writer must only be measured by the highest standards—will find it often weak, cold, mechanical in the construction of its sentences, and somewhat lifeless in the abstractness of its diction. Just as the actors are for the most part indicated by their social status instead of by their *names*, *i. e.* the Captain, the Architect, the Schoolmistress, the Tutor, the Mediator, the Englishman, the Travelling Companion, the Priest, and the Surgeon; so also are things indicated by abstract terms, the concrete is avoided, and a periphrasis preferred to the direct phrase. There is also a fatiguing recurrence of certain set forms of phrase. Passages of great beauty there are, touches of poetry no reader will overlook. The last chapter is a poem. Its pathos is so simple that one needs to be in robust mood to read it. The page also where Charlotte and the Captain are on the lake together under the faint light of appearing stars, is a poem the music of which approaches that of verse.

Minna Herzlieb, to whom we owe this novel, lived to be a happy wife. Goethe long carried the arrow in his heart. In 1810, he once more gave poetic expression to his experience in an erotic poem, setting forth the conflict of Love and Duty. The nature of this poem, however, prevented its publication, and it still exists only as a manuscript. In this year also he commenced his *Autobiography*, the first part of which appeared in 1811. The public, anxious for autobiography, received it with a disappointment which is perfectly intelligible; charming

as the book is in every other respect, it is tantalizing to a reader curious to see the great poet in his youth.

Before writing this *Autobiography* he had to outlive the sorrow for his mother's death. She died on the 13th of September 1808, in her 78th year. To the last, her love for her son, and his for her, had been the glory and sustainment of her happy old age. He had wished her to come and live with him at Weimar; but the circle of old Frankfurt friends, and the influence of old habits, kept her in her native city, where she was venerated by all.

CHAPTER IV.

POLITICS AND RELIGION.

Another volume would be required to record with anything like fulness the details of the remaining years. There is no deficiency of material. In his letters, and the letters of friends and acquaintances, will be found an ample gleaning; but unhappily the materials are abundant precisely at the point where the interest of the story begins to fade. From sixty to eighty-two is a long period; but it is not a period in which persons and events influence a man; his character, already developed, can receive no new direction. At this period biography is at an end, and necrology begins. For Germans, the details to which I allude, have interest; but the English reader would receive with quite mediocre gratitude a circumstantial narrative of all Goethe did and studied; all the excursions he made; every cold and toothache which afflicted him; every person he conversed with.*

I may mention however his acquaintance with Beethoven, on account of the undying interest attached to the two names.

* The period which is included in this Seventh Book occupies no less than 563 pages of Viehoff's Biography; yet, while I have added a great many details to those collected by Viehoff, I do not think any of interest have been omitted.

They were together for a few days at Töplitz, with the most profound admiration for each other's genius. The biographer of Beethoven adds: "But though Beethoven has praised Goethe's patience with him (on account of his deafness), still it is a fact, that the great poet, and minister, too soon forgot the great composer; and when, in 1823, he had it in his power to render him an essential service with little trouble to himself, he did not even deign to reply to a very humble epistle from our master." This is the way accusations are made; this is the kind of evidence on which they are believed. The only *facts* here established are, that Beethoven wrote to Goethe, and that Goethe did not reply. Beethoven's letter requested Goethe to recommend the Grand Duke to subscribe to his Mass. It was doubtless very mortifying not to receive a reply; such things always are mortifying, and offended self-love is apt to suggest bad motives for the offence. But a bystander, knowing how many motives may actuate the conduct, and unwilling to suppose a bad motive for which there is no evidence, will at once see that the inferences of Goethe's "not deigning to to reply", and of having "forgotten the great composer", are by no means warranted by the facts. We know that Goethe was naturally of an active benevolence; we know that he was constantly recommending to the Grand Duke some object of charitable assistance; we know that he profoundly admired Beethoven, and had no cause to be offended with him; and, knowing this, we must accept any interpretation of the fact of silence in preference to that which the angry Beethoven, and his biographer, have inferred.

To pursue our narrative: The year 1813, which began the War of Independence, was to Goethe a year of troubles. It began with an affliction—the death of his old friend Wieland; which shook him more than those who knew him best were

prepared for. Herder; Schiller; the Duchess Amalia; his Mother; and now Wieland,—one by one had fallen away, and left him lonely, advancing in years.

Nor was this the only source of unhappiness. Political troubles came to disturb his plans. Germany was rising against the tyranny of Napoleon; rising, as Goethe thought, in vain. "You will not shake off your chains," he said to Körner, "the man is too powerful; you will only press them deeper into your flesh." His doubts were shared by many; but happily the nation shared them not. While patriots were rousing the wrath of the nation into the resistance of despair, he tried to "escape from the present, because it is impossible to live in such circumstances and not go mad"; he took refuge, as he always did, in Art. He wrote the ballads *Der Todtentanz, Der getreue Eckart,* and *die wandelnde Glocke;* wrote the essay *Shakspeare und kein Ende,* and finished the third volume of his *Autobiography.* He buried himself in the study of Chinese history. Nay, on the very day of the battle of Leipsic, he wrote the epilogue to the tragedy of *Essex,* for the favourite actress, Madame Wolf.*

Patriotic writers are unsparing in sarcasms on a man who could thus seek refuge in Poetry from the bewildering troubles of politics, and find no other explanation than that he was an Egoist. Other patriotic writers, among them some of ultra republicanism, such as Karl Grün, have eloquently defended him. They may fight it out between them. I do not think it necessary to add arguments to those already suggested respecting his relation to politics (pp. 164 seq). Those who are impatient with him for being what he was, and not what they

* Curiously enough, on that very day of Napoleon's first great defeat, his medallion, which was hung on the wall of Goethe's study, fell from its nail on to the ground.

are, will listen to no arguments. It is needless to point out how, at sixty-four, he was not likely to become a politician, having up to that age sedulously avoided politics. It is needless to show that he was not in a position which called upon him to *do* anything. The grievance seems to be that he wrote no war songs, issued no manifestos, but strove to keep himself as much as possible out of the hearing of contemporary history. If this was a crime, the motive was not criminal. Judge the act as you will, but do not misjudge the motive. To attribute such an act to cowardice, or fear of compromising himself, is infamous, in the face of all the evidence we have of his character. When the mighty Napoleon threatened the Grand Duke, we have seen how Goethe was roused. That was an individual injustice, which he could clearly understand, and was prepared to combat. For the Duke he would turn ballad-singer; for the Nation he had no voice; and why? Because there was no Nation. He saw clearly then, what is now seen clearly, that Germany had no existence as a Nation. And he failed to see what now is clearly seen, that the German Peoples were, for the time, united by national enthusiasm, united by a common feeling of hatred against France; failing to see this, he thought that a collection of disunited Germans were certain to be destroyed in a struggle with Napoleon. He was wrong; the event has proved his error; but his error of opinion must not be made an accusation against his sincerity. When Luden the historian, whose testimony is the weightier because it is that of a patriot, had that interview with him, after the battle of Leipsic, which he has recorded with so much feeling,* the impression left was, he says, "that I was deeply convinced they are in grievous error who blame Goethe for a want of love of country, a want of German feeling, a want of faith in the

* *Luden's Rückblicke in mein Leben*, p. 113 seq.

German people, or of sympathy with its honour and shame, its fortune or misery. His silence about great events was simply a painful resignation, to which he was necessarily led by his position and his knowledge of mankind." Luden came to him to speak of a projected journal, the *Nemesis*, which was to excite the nation's hatred of France. Goethe dissuaded him. "Do not believe", he said, after a pause, "that I am indifferent to the great ideas—Freedom, Fatherland, and People. No; these ideas are in us; they form a portion of our being which no one can cast off. Germany is dear to my heart. I have often felt a bitter pain at the thought that the German people, so honourable as individuals, should be so miserable as a whole. A comparison of the German people with other peoples awakens a painful feeling, which I try to escape in any way I can; and in Art and Science I have found such escapes: *for they belong to the world at large, and before them vanish all the limits of nationality.* But this consolation is after all but a poor one, and is no compensation for the proud conviction that one belongs to a great, strong, honoured, and dreaded people." He spoke also of Germany's future, but he saw that this future was still far distant. "For us, meanwhile, this alone remains: let every one, according to his talents, according to his tendencies and according to his position, *do his utmost to increase the culture and development of the people,* to strengthen and widen it on all sides, that the people may not lag behind other peoples, but may become competent for every great action when the day of its glories arrives." Very wise words, however unpalatable to enthusiastic patriotism. Turning from such abstract considerations to the question of the journal, and the probability of "awakening" the German People to Freedom. "But *is* the people awakened?" he continued. "Does it know what it wants and what it wills? Have you forgotten what

that honest Philister in Jena said to his neighbour, as in his joy he called out, that the French were departed, and his rooms were ready for the reception of the Russians? The sleep has been too deep for a mere shaking to alter it. And is every agitation an elevation? We are not now considering the cultivated youth, but the many, the millions. And what will be won? Freedom, you say; but perhaps it would be more correct to call it a setting free—*not, however, a setting free from the yoke of foreigners, but from a foreign yoke.* True, I no longer see Frenchmen, no longer see Italians; but *in their place I see Cossacks, Baschkirs, Croats, Magyars and other Hussars.*"

Such admirable wisdom is even now-a-days worthy of meditation. He who thought thus, was little likely to be found among the enthusiasts of that day, had he been at the age of enthusiasm. But, as he said to Eckermann, who alluded to the reproaches against him for not having written war songs, "How could I take up arms without hatred, and how could I hate without youth? If such an emergency had befallen me when twenty years old, I should certainly not have been the last; but it found me past sixty. Besides we cannot all serve our country in the same way, but each does his best according as God has endowed him. I have toiled hard enough during half a century, I can say, that in those things which nature has appointed for my daily work, I have permitted myself no relaxation or repose, but have always striven, investigated, and done as much, and as well, as I could. If every one can say the same of himself, it will prove well with all. To write military songs, and sit in a room! That forsooth was my duty! To have written them in the bivouac when the horses at the evening's outposts are heard neighing at night, would have been well enough; that was not my way of life nor my

business, but that of Theodore Körner. His war songs suit him perfectly. But to me, who am not of a warlike nature, and who have no warlike sense, war songs would have been a mask which would have fitted my face very badly. I have never affected anything in my poetry. I have never uttered anything which I have not experienced, and which has not urged me to production. I have only composed love songs when I have loved; and how could I write songs of hatred without hating?"

Connected with this political indifference, and mainly the cause of it, was his earnestness in Art; an earnestness which has been made the evidence of this most extraordinary charge against him, namely, that he "looked on life only as an Artist". The phrase has become the stereotyped. Everyone who has heard anything of Goethe, has heard that. It is uttered with the confidence of conviction, and is meant to convey a volume of implicit reprobation.

Let us examine the charge. When a man devotes himself to a special science, gives to it the greater part of his time, his thoughts and sympathies, we marvel at his energy, and laud his passionate devotion; we do not make his earnestness a crime; we do not say of a Faraday that he "looks at life only as a Chemist"; of an Owen "that he looks at life only as a Zoologist". It is understood that any great pursuit must necessarily draw away the thoughts and activities from other pursuits. Why then is Art to be excluded from the same serious priivilege? Why is the Artist who is in earnest excluded from the toleration spontaneously awarded to the Philosopher? I know but of one reason, and that is the indisposition in men to accept Art as serious. Because it ministers directly to our pleasures, Art is looked on as the child of luxury, the product of idleness; and those who cannot rise to

the height of the conception which animated a Goethe and a Schiller, are apt to treat it as mere rhetoric and self-importance in men who speak of Art as the noblest form of Culture. Indeed those who regard Painting and Sculpture as means of supplying their dining-rooms and galleries with costly ornaments; Music, as furnishing the excuse for a box at the opera; and Poetry as an agreeable pastime, may be justified in thinking lightly of painters, sculptors, musicians, and poets. But I will not suppose the reader to be one of this class; and may therefore appeal to his truer appreciation for a verdict in favour of the claims made by Art to serious recognition, as one of the many forms of national culture. This granted, it follows that the more earnestly the Artist accepts and follows his career, the more honour does he claim from us.

Now Goethe was a man of too profoundly serious a nature not to be in earnest with whatever he undertook; an earnest and laborious life he led, when he might have led one of pleasure and luxurious idleness. "To scorn delights and live laborious days", with no other reward than the reward of activity, the delight of development, was one of the necessities of his nature. He worked at Science with the patient labour of one who had to earn his bread; and he worked in the face of dire discouragement, with no reward in the shape of pence or praise. In Art, which was the "haunt and the main region" of his intellectual strivings, he naturally strove after completeness. He sought material everywhere. If the Philosopher is observed drawing materials for his generalizations out of even the frivolities of the passing hour, learning in the theatre, the ball-room, or in the incoherent talk of railway passengers, to detect illustrations of the laws he is silently elaborating, we do not accuse him of looking on life only as a Philosopher, thereby implying that he is deficient in the feelings of his race; yet

something like this is done by those who make a crime of Goethe's constant endeavour to collect from life material for Art.

If when it is said "he looked on life only as an Artist", the meaning is that he, as an Artist, necessarily made Art the principal occupation of his life, the phrase is a truism; and if the meaning is that he isolated himself from the labours and pursuits of his fellow men, to play with life, and arrange it as an agreeable drama, the phrase is a calumny. Let the reader of these pages pronounce. Has the life here laid before him shown Goethe deficient in benevolence, in lovingness, in sympathy with others and their pursuits? or shown any evidence of a nature so wrapped in self-indulgence, and so coldly calculating, that life *could* become a mere plaything to it? If the answer be No, then let us hear no more about Goethe's looking on life only as an Artist.

While one party has assailed him for his political indifference, another, and still more ferocious party has assailed him for what they call his want of religion. The man who can read Goethe's works and not perceive in them a spirit deeply religious, must limit the word religion to the designation of his own doctrines; and the man who, reading them, discovers that Goethe was not orthodox, is discovering the sun at mid-day. Orthodox he never pretended to be. His religious experiences had begun early, and his doubts began with them. There are those who regard Doubt as criminal in itself; but no human soul that has once struggled, that has once been perplexed with baffling thoughts which it has been too sincere to huddle away and stifle in precipitate conclusions, dreading to face the consequences of doubt, will speak thus harshly and unworthily of it.

> There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds:

He fought his doubts and gathered strength;
He would not make his judgment blind;
He faced the spectres of the mind,
And laid them: thus he came at length
To find a stronger faith his own.*

The course of his opinions, as we have seen, was often altered. At times he approached the strictness of strict sects; at times he went whole lengths in scepticism. The Fräulein von Klettenberg taught him to sympathize with the Moravians; but Lavater's unconscious hypocrisy, and the conscious hypocrisy and moral degradation of the Italian priesthood, gradually changed his respect for the Christian Churches into open and sometimes sarcastic contempt of priests and priesthoods. In various epochs of his long life he expressed himself so variously that a pietist may claim him, or a Voltairian may claim him: both with equal show of justice. The secret of this contradiction lies in the fact that he had deep religious sentiments with complete scepticism on most religious doctrines. Thus, whenever the Encyclopedists attacked Christianity he was ready to defend it; but when he was brought in contact with dogmatic Christians, who wanted to force their creed upon him, he resented the attempt, and answered in the spirit of his scepticism. To the Encyclopedists he would say, "Whatever frees the intellect, without at the same time giving us command over ourselves, is pernicious;" or he would utter one of his profound and pregnant *γνωμαι*, such as

Nur das Gesetz kann uns die Freiheit geben,

i. e., only within the circle of Law can there be true Freedom. We are not free when we acknowledge no higher power, but when we acknowledge it, and in reverence raise ourselves by proving that a Higher lives in us.

* *In Memoriam.*

But against dogmatic teachings he opposed the fundamental rule, that all conceptions of the Deity must necessarily be *our* individual conceptions, valid for us, but not to the same extent for others. Each has his own religion; must have it as an individual possession; let each see that he be true to it, which is far more efficacious than trying to accommodate himself to another's!

Im Innern ist ein Universum auch;
Daher der Völker löblicher Gebrauch
Dass Jeglicher das Beste was er kennt
Er Gott, ja seinen Gott benennt.

"I *believe* in God" was, he said, "a beautiful and praiseworthy phrase; but to *recognize* God in all his manifestations, *that* is true holiness on earth." He declared himself in the deepest sense of the word a Protestant, and as such claimed "the right of holding his inner being free from all prescribed dogma, the right of developing himself religiously!" With reference to the genuineness of Scripture, he maintained with the modern Spiritualists that nothing is genuine but what is truly excellent, which stands in harmony with the purest nature and reason, and which even now ministers to our highest development. He looked upon the Four Gospels as genuine, "for there is in them a reflection of a greatness which emanated from the person of Jesus, and which was of as divine a kind as was ever seen upon earth. If I am asked whether it is in my nature to pay Him devout reverence I say—certainly! I bow before Him as the divine manifestation of the highest morality. If I am asked whether it is in my nature to reverence the sun I again say—certainly! For he is likewise a manifestation of the highest Being. I adore in him the light and the productive power of God; by which we all live, move, and have our being. But if I am asked whether I am inclined to

bow before a thumb bone of the apostle Peter or Paul I say—away with your absurdities! * * * Let mental culture go on advancing, let science go on gaining in depth and breadth, and the human intellect expand as it may, it will never go beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity as it shines forth in the Gospels. The mischievous sectarianism of Protestants will one day cease, and with it the hatred between father and son, sister and brother; for as soon as the pure doctrine and love of Christ are comprehended in their true nature, and have become a living principle, we shall feel ourselves great and free as human beings, and not attach special importance to a degree more or less in the outward forms of religion. Besides, we shall all gradually advance from a Christianity of words and faith to a Christianity of feeling and action." He was eighty-two when those words were uttered to Eckermann. Ten years before, he wrote to his old friend the Countess von Stolberg: "I have meant honestly all my life both with myself and others, and in all my earthly strivings have ever looked upwards to the Highest. You and yours have done so likewise. Let us continue to work thus while there is daylight for us; for others another sun will shine by which they will work, while for us a brighter Light will shine. And so let us remain untroubled about the future! In our Father's kingdom there are many provinces, and as He has given us here so happy a resting place, so will He certainly care for us above; perhaps we shall be blessed with what here on earth has been denied us, to know one another merely by seeing one another, and thence more thoroughly to love one another."

There are two aspects under which religion may be considered: the divine aspect, and the human aspect; in the one it is Theosophy, in the other Ethics. Goethe's Theosophy was

that of Spinoza, modified by his own poetical tendencies; it was not a geometrical but a poetical Pantheism. In it the whole universe was conceived as divine; not as a lifeless mass, but as the living manifestation of Divine Energy ever flowing forth into activity. St. Paul tells us God lives in everything, and everything in God. Science tells us with iterated emphasis that the world is always *becoming*. Creation continues. The world was not made, once and for ever, as a thing completed, and afterwards serenely contemplated. The world was made and is still amaking. The primal energies of Life are as young and potent as of old, issuing forth under new forms through metamorphoses higher and ever higher, as dawn broadens into day.

Goethe's religion was eminently concrete and devout in its worship of realities. His was the piety of truth. He believed in visible fact; he thought reality in itself holier than any fiction could make it. Human nature was to him a holy fact, and man's body a temple of holiness. This is Hellenic, but its kinship with Spinoza's system is also obvious. Spinoza had no sympathy with those philosophers who deride or vilify human nature: in his opinion it was better to try to understand it; and disregarding the clamours of those who conceived the emotions and actions of human nature to be chaotic and absurd, he analyzed its properties as if it had been a mathematical figure. In other words, he inquired without passion, reasoned without foregone conclusions, interrogated the facts as they presented themselves, and recorded the simple answers.* And this did

* *Ethices*, Pars III, præfatio: "Nam ad illos revertere volo, qui hominum affectus et actiones detestari vel ridere malunt, quam intelligere. His sine dubio mirum videbitur, quod hominum vitia et ineptias more geometrico tractare aggrediar, et certa ratione demonstrare velim ea quæ rationi repugnare, quæque vana, absurda, et horrenda esse clamitant. Sed mea hæc ratio est."

Goethe. He strove above all things to understand fact, because fact was divine manifestation. The mystic change of birth and death—the sweet influences of opening life and orderly development—the restless strivings and the placid rests—the ever-moving shuttles of the "roaring Loom of Time, which weaves for God the garment we see him by"—were to him the "freshly uttered word of God." This conception has been nobly expressed by Wordsworth in many passages, nowhere more beautifully than in the lines on Tintern Abbey:

> And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

Goethe's moral system was intimately connected with this Theosophy. His worship was Nature worship, his moral system an idealization of Humanity. The human being was the highest manifestation of the Divine on earth, and the highest manifestation of Humanity was therefore the ideal to which morality tended. We must first learn Renunciation; we must learn to limit ourselves to the Possible; in this first restraint lies the germ of self-sacrifice: in the giving up of claims too high for attainment, we learn to give up claims for the sake of others. True piety springs from human love. "If certain phenomena of nature," he says, "looked at from the moral standing point, force us to assume the existence of a primitive Evil, so on the other hand many phenomena force us to assume a primitive Good. This spring of goodness, when

flowing into life, we name *Piety;* as the ancients did, who regarded it as the basis of all virtue. It is the force which counterbalances egoism; and if by a miracle it could for a moment suddenly be active in all men, the earth would at once be free from evil."

It would be no difficult task to select from his works a series of moral propositions of the noblest character; but indeed his works are saturated with a morality such as speaks to every heart not prejudiced, and are even more remarkable for the absence of any mean, groveling, selfish, and narrow views than for their direct teaching. The cry of "Immorality" which has been sometimes raised against his works, springs from that uncharitableness which denounces every thought not taught by the denouncing sect. If anyone can read Goethe's works and not feel the writer to have been one strengthened by the noblest sentiments, and warmed by the purest love for human nature in its most generous forms, I have nothing to add to the words of the spirit in *Faust*,—

Du gleichst dem Geist den du begreifst,—

i. e., "You resemble the Spirit which you understand."*

Whatever else he has been accused of, he has never been accused of not having striven incessantly to reach a full development of his own being, and to aid the culture of his

* I heard a capital story in Berlin, of Carlyle at a dinner party silencing the nauseous cant about Goethe's want of religion, by one of his characteristic sarcasms. For some time he sat quiet, but not patient, while certain pietists were throwing up their eyes, and regretting that so great a genius! so god-like a genius! should not have more purely devoted himself to the service of Christian Truth! and should have had so little, etc., etc. Carlyle sat grim, ominously silent, his hands impatiently twisting his serviette, until at last he broke silence, and in his slow emphatic way said, "*Meine Herren*, did you never hear the story of that man who vilified the sun because it would not light his cigar?" This bombshell completely silenced the enemy's fire. Not a word was spoken in reply. "I could have kissed him!" exclaimed the enthusiastic artist who narrated the anecdote to me.

nation. There is something truly grand in the picture of his later years; so calm, and yet so active. His sympathy, instead of growing cold with age, seems every year to become more active. Every discovery in Science, every new appearance in Literature, every promise in Art finds him eager as a child to be instructed, and ready with aid or applause to further it.

Old age indeed is a relative term. Goethe at seventy was younger than many men at fifty; and at eighty-two he wrote a scientific review of the great discussion between Cuvier and Geoffroy St. Hilaire on Philosophic Zoology, a review which few men in their prime could write. But there are Physiologists who deny that seventy is old age. M. Flourens, for example, maintains that from fifty-five to seventy, man is at his most virile period; and M. Reveillé Parise, in his work *La Vieillesse*, declares that between fifty-five and seventy-five, and sometimes beyond, the mind acquires an extension, a consistence, and a solidity truly remarkable,—"c'est véritablement l'homme ayant atteint toute la hauteur de ses facultés". And the history of Science and Literature furnishes several striking examples of intellectual activity in old age—the activity being doubtless a cause of this prolongation of power. Sophocles, who is said to have written his masterpiece at eighty, is an example of great poetic capacity thus prolonged. The reflective powers often retain their capacity, and by increase of material seem to *increase* it; but not so the productive powers. Yet in Goethe we see extraordinary fertility, even in the latest years: the Second Part of *Faust* was completed in his eighty-first year, and the *west-östliche Divan* was written in his sixty-fifth. Although we cannot by any means consider these works as equal to the works of his earlier days, we must still consider them as marvellous productions to issue under the sunset of a poet.

The *west-östliche Divan* was a refuge from the troubles of the time. Instead of making himself unhappy with the politics of Europe, he made himself happy studying the history and poetry of the East. He even began to study the Oriental languages, and was delighted to be able to copy the Arabic manuscripts in their peculiar characters. Von Hammer, De Sacy, and other Orientalists had given him abundant material; his poetic activity soon gave that material shape. But while donning the Turban, and throwing the Caftan over his shoulders, he remained a true German. He smoked opium, and drank *Foukah;* but his dreams were German and his songs were German. This forms the peculiarity of the Divan —it is West-Eastern; the images are Eastern; the feeling is Western. Precisely as in the Roman Elegies he had thrown himself into the classical past, reproducing its forms with unsurpassed ease and witchery, yet never for a moment ceasing to be original, never ceasing to be German; so also in this Eastern world we recognize the Western poet. He follows the Caravan slowly across the desert; he hears the melancholy chant of the Bulbul singing on the borders of sparkling fountains; he listens devoutly to the precepts of Mohammed, and rejoices in the strains of Hafis. The combination is most felicitous. It produced an epoch in German Literature. The Lyrists, according to Gervinus, suddenly following this example, at once relinquished their warlike and contemporary tone to sing the songs of the East. Rückert and Platen, following the trace of the German Hafis, wandered among Roses and Ghazels, and other poets gladly imitated them. Does it not seem as if there were a natural tendency in the German character to turn the back upon active political life, when we see that in the two great crises of history, in the Crusades and in the War of Independence, the poets fled from the stormy contemplation of their

time, seeking inspiration in an order of ideas completely opposed to the time? The Minnesingers, amid the clang of knightly achievements, could only sing of Love and Pleasure; the modern poets, amid the storms of an European struggle, could find no inspiration but in Romanticism, or in Orientalism! This is the more noticeable because Goethe has been angrily reproached for his flight into the East; although surely the aged poet might find an excuse when the young poets were applauded?

The *west-östliche Divan* is divided into twelve Books: the Singer, Hafis, Love, Contemplation, Sadness, Proverbs, Timour, Suleika, Wine-house, Parables, Persians, and Paradise; very various in contents, and of various excellence. Truly may be applied to Goethe the epigraph he applies to Hafis: "Let us call the Word the Bride, and the Spirit will be the Bridegroom; he who has known Hafis has seen this marriage:"

> Sey das Wort die Braut genannt
> Bräutigam der Geist;
> Diese Hochzeit hat gekannt
> Wer Hafisen preis't.

How much of his own experience he has clothed in these Eastern forms we cannot know; but in one case, in the *Buch Suleika*, he has placed the name of Hatem where the rhyme plainly tells us to read Goethe:

> Du beschämst, wie Morgenröthe
> Jener Gipfel ernste Wand,
> Und noch einmal fühlet *Hatem*
> Frühlingshauch und Sommerbrand.

The grace with which many of these poems are lightly touched; the admirable wisdom which smiles so serenely under them; the calm, hot, noonday stillness, interchanging with the careless gaiety of the Wine-house mirth, cannot be indicated by trans-

lation; nor will I attempt it. For the sake of the German reader, however, here is one brief specimen:

Trunken müssen wir alle seyn!
Jugend ist Trunkenheit ohne Wein;
Trinkt sich das Alter wieder zu Jugend
So ist es wundervolle Tugend.
Für Sorgen sorgt das liebe Leben
Und Sorgenbrecher sind die Reben.

To these poems is added a volume of Historical Notes, which show indeed a conscientious study of the East, but which also show how immeasurably inferior he was in prose to poetry. Age is visible in every page.

In the early chapters of his *Autobiography* he had presented a picture of Frankfurt, which was very gratifying to the people of that city; and when, in the year 1814, he passed through the city he was received with an ovation which recalls the last visit of Voltaire to Paris. *Tasso* was performed at the theatre with great pomp. No sooner did he make his appearance in the box which had been prepared for him, and which was hung with flowers and laurel-crowns, than Haydn's symphony struck up, and the whole house rose with a burst of enthusiastic cheering. The symphony continued, and the shouts rose tumultuously above it. At length the curtain rolled up, and gradually a solemn stillness settled through the house. A prologue greeted the great poet, and was the signal for more shouting. After *Tasso* came an epilogue, during which the laurel-crowns were taken from the busts of Ariosto and Tasso, and handed to Goethe. And when all was over, the corridors and staircases of the theatre were crowded with admirers, through whom he passed smiling his thanks.

CHAPTER V.

THE ACTIVITY OF AGE.

In the year 1816 he began to publish an Art Journal, *Kunst und Alterthum*, which continued till 1828, a curious monument of the old man's studies and activity. It is curious, moreover, as indicating a change in the direction of his ideas. We have seen what his relation was to the Romantic School, and how the tendencies of his nature and education led him to oppose the characteristics of that School by the characteristics of Greek Art. The *Propylaen* represents the Greek tendency; *Kunst und Alterthum* represents a certain leaning towards the Romantic. Gothic Art, the old German and Netherland painters, no longer seemed to him objectionable; but the discovery of the Elgin marbles once more awakened his enthusiasm for that perfection of form which was the ideal of Greek Art;* and I have heard Rauch, the sculptor, humorously narrate Goethe's whimsical outbreaks when the young sculptor Ritschl seemed in danger of perverting his talent by executing designs in the spirit of the Romantic School.

Strong, however, as the opposition was which he felt to the

* See his letter to Haydon in the *Life of Haydon*, vol. II, p. 295.

vagaries of the so-called Christian Art, he had too much of the *Faust* spirit to keep entirely aloof from the Romanticists. In his old age, the tendency to substitute Reflection for Inspiration naturally assumed greater force; and his old love of mystification was now wearing a serious aspect, duping himself perhaps as much as it duped others. The German nation had persisted in discovering profound meanings in passages which he had written without any recondite meaning at all; finding himself a prophet when he meant only to be a poet, he gradually fell into the snare, and tried to be a prophet now he could no longer be so great a poet as before. Every incident was to be typical. Every phrase was of importance. Whether the lion should roar at a particular time (in the *Novelle*), or whether he should be silent, were subjects of long deliberation. The *Wanderjahre* was one great arsenal of symbols, the Second Part of *Faust* another. He delighted in seeing the philosophic critics outdoing each other in far-fetched ingenuity, "explaining" his *Faust* and *Meister;* and very astutely he refused to come to their aid. He saw libraries filled with discussions as to what he had intended; but no one ever seduced him into an explanation which would have silenced these discussions. Instead of doing so, he seemed disposed to furnish the world with more riddles. In a word, he mystified the public; but he did so in a grave, unconscious way, with a certain belief in his own mystification.

In the year 1816, Saxe Weimar was made a Grand Duchy; and he received the Falcon Order, together with an increase of salary, which now became three thousand thalers, with extra allowance for his equipage. Two other events made this year memorable. Lotte—Werther's Lotte—now a widow in her sixtieth year, and mother of twelve children, pays him a visit at Weimar. They had not met since her marriage, and what

a meeting this must have been for both! how strange a mingling of feelings recurrent to a pleasantly-agitated past, and of feelings perplexed by the surprise of finding each other so much changed! I am told that Lotte, in spite of her grey hairs, arrayed herself in white, and tried to be coquettish and sentimental; but the old Jupiter was in no mood for such reminiscences, and would not recur to the blue coat and top-boots of Werther.

The second and far more serious event of the year, is the death of his wife. Many affected to consider this a "happy release"; people are fond of arranging the lives of others according to their own conceptions, and of interpreting afflictions like these without regard to the feelings of the afflicted. The blow was heavy to bear. She who for eight-and-twenty years had loved and aided him, who—whatever her faults—had been to him what no other woman was, could not be taken from him without making him deeply feel the loss. He has expressed those feelings in two passages only; in the exquisite lines he wrote on the day of her death, and in a letter to Zelter. These are the lines:—

Du versuchst, O Sonne, vergebens
Durch die düstern Wolken zu scheinen!
Der ganze Gewinn meines Lebens
Ist, ihren Verlust zu beweinen.*

And to Zelter the words were these: "When I tell thee, thou rough and sorely-tried son of earth, that my dear little wife has left me, thou wilt know what that means."

In Science he strove to find forgetfulness; and the loneliness of his house was next year changed into an unaccustomed liveliness by the marriage of his son with Ottilie von Pogwisch,

* "In vain, O Sun, you struggle to shine through the dark clouds; the whole gain of my life is to bewail her loss."

one of the gayest and most brilliant of the Weimar circle. She was always a great favourite with her father-in-law, and during the remainder of his life not only kept his house for him, and received his numerous guests, but became a privileged favourite, to whom everything was permitted. In the year following he sang a cradle song over his first grandchild.

His ministerial duties were not heavy, but were punctiliously performed. Here are two anecdotes which exhibit his imperious and determined character in a strong light. He had long laboured for the improvement of Jena. The library, he told Eckermann, "was in very bad condition. The situation was damp and close, and by no means fit to contain its treasures in a proper manner; particularly as by purchase of the Büttner library on the part of the Grand Duke, an addition had been made of 13,000 volumes, which lay in heaps upon the floor, because there was no room to place them properly. I was really in some distress on that account. An addition should have been made to the building, but for this the means were wanting; and moreover this addition could easily be avoided, since adjoining the library there was a large room standing empty, and quite calculated to supply our necessities. However, this room was not in possession of the library, but was used by the medical faculty, who sometimes employed it for their conferences. I therefore applied to these gentlemen with the very civil request that they would give up this room for the library. To this they would not agree. They were willing, they said, to give it up if I would have a new room built for their conferences, and that immediately. I replied that I should be very ready to have another place prepared for them, but that I could not promise them a new building immediately. This did not satisfy them, for when next morning I asked them for the key, I was told it could not be found! There

now remained no other course but to enter as conqueror. I therefore sent for a bricklayer, and took him into the library before the wall of the adjoining room. 'This wall, my friend,' said I, 'must be very thick, for it separates two different parts of the building: just try how strong it is.' The bricklayer went to work, and scarcely had he given five or six hearty blows, when bricks and mortar fell in, and one could see through the opening some venerable perukes with which the room was decorated. 'Go on, my friend,' said I. 'I cannot yet see clearly enough. Do not restrain yourself, but act as if you were in your own house.' This friendly encouragement so animated the bricklayer, that the opening was soon large enough to serve perfectly for a door; when my library attendants rushed into the room each with an armful of books, which they threw upon the ground as a sign of possession. Benches, chairs, and desks vanished in a moment; and my assistants were so quick and active, that in a few days all the books were arranged along the walls. The doctors, who soon after entered the room through the usual door, were quite confounded at so unexpected a change. They did not know what to say, but retired in silence; but they all harboured a secret grudge against me. When I related this to the Grand Duke, he laughed heartily and quite approved me. Afterwards, when on account of the great dampness of the library I wished to take down and remove the whole of the old city wall, which was quite useless, I found no better success. My entreaties, reasons, and representations found no hearing; and I was forced at last to go to work as a conqueror. When the city authorities saw my workmen destroying their old wall, they sent a deputation to the Grand Duke, with the humble request that his Highness would be pleased, by a word of command, to check my violent destruction of their venerable wall. But the Grand

Duke, who had secretly authorized me, said: 'I do not intermeddle with Goethe's affairs. He knows what he has to do, and must act as he thinks right. Go to him and speak to him yourself, if you have the courage!'"

The other anecdote is recorded by Luden. In 1823 the *Landtag* (or Parliament, to use the nearest English equivalent) assembled, and demanded the Finance accounts. Goethe, who was at the head of the Commission for Art and Science to which a sum of 11,787 thalers was allotted, at first took no notice of the demand make for his accounts; but was heard to express himself angrily at this Landtag with its pedantic fuss about a paltry sum. At length he was prevailed upon to send in his accounts. What was the surprise of the Landtag to read a few lines to this effect: "Received, so much; Expended, so much; Remains, so much. *Signed* Grossherzogl. Immediatcommission für Wissenschaft und Kunst, *Goethe!*" At this cavalier procedure some of the members burst out laughing; others were indignant, and proposed to refuse the grant for the following year; a proposition which was all the more acceptable because the Landtag had a great idea of economy, and but a small idea of the value of Science and Art. Luden strove to convince them this was an unwise procedure. He urged indeed the necessity of the Landtag being put in possession of all the details of expenditure, not that any doubt could arise respecting the judicious mode in which the expenditure had been made, but because in public affairs it was indispensable men should see as well as believe. Against him it was argued that the mere statement of every groschen received and expended was not sufficient; it was also necessary that the Landtag should be convinced that the expenditure had been solely for useful and desirable purposes, not permitting any favouritism or luxury to enjoy the benefit of public money.

Although the sittings of the Landtag were strictly private, one cannot be surprised at these debates having oozed out and formed the topic of gossip. Goethe was very indignant. He had been so long accustomed to an imperial sway, before which every one gave way, that the idea of his actions being controlled and questioned by a Landtag was very irritating to him. Nor, obviously as he was in the wrong in this instance, were the Grand Duke and Duchess inclined to side againt him. Karl August himself spoke earnestly to the Land Marshall, urging on him the impropriety of so offending Goethe; the Grand Duchess sent for Luden, who thus reports the interview: "She spoke to me with that dignified simplicity which made her so imposing, and which was imposing even to Napoleon in his anger. It would be a serious evil, she said, if our friendly relations should be disturbed by any misunderstanding. It would be the more unpleasant to me, because I fear it would much annoy the Grand Duke. The Landtag is unquestionably in the right; but the Geheimrath Goethe undoubtedly thinks he too is in the right. Above or beyond the written laws there is still another law—*the law for poets and women.* The Landtag is assuredly convinced that the whole of the money granted has been truly employed by Goethe? You admit that? Well, then, the only question that now can arise is whether the money has been properly expended. But here one must remember the position held by the Geheimrath in relation to the world, to this country, to our Court, and to the Grand Duke through a long series of years: this position very naturally has influenced his mode of looking at affairs. I find it perfectly intelligible that he can well believe he has before all others the right of deciding for himself what is the best means of employing the money placed at his disposal. I do not understand these matters, and far be it from me to pretend

to set any one right; my only wish is that friendly relations be preserved, and that the old Geheimrath may be spared every annoyance. How this is to be done I do not see. But the Landtag need be under no uneasiness lest this should become a precedent. *We have but one Goethe, and who knows how long we may preserve him;* a second will not perhaps be soon found again."

Is this not very charming? And can we wonder that Luden was conquered, and that in turn the whole Landtag was brought over to a sort of sullen acquiescence? While relating such characteristic anecdotes, place must be found for another, which is indeed less interesting in itself, but which circulates in Germany and England under a very absurd and very injurious form. The first time I heard it gravely stated as a fact, of which proof could be brought, the reader may imagine with what indignation I at once denied it, and insisted on the proof being produced, although proof must have been indeed overwhelming which could make me believe that Goethe had *stolen an ingot of gold.* No proof, however, came. The accusation slipped from my mind, until it was once more gravely adduced, and that too in Weimar. The requisite inquiries having been made, this story emerged as the foundation of the scandal.

The Emperor of Russia had forwarded to Döbereiner, the great chemist, a bar of platinum. It was given to Goethe, who was to examine it, and make any experiment on it he pleased, and then transmit it to Döbereiner. Goethe, whose passion for minerals is well known, and who had the "collector's mania", placed this bar of platinum among his treasures, and delighted himself with contemplating it, till at last he could not be brought to part with it. Döbereiner, impatient, wrote to him, begging to have it sent. But no answer came. He

wrote again, without success. He was, indeed, placed in a position very similar to that in which we saw Professor Büttner, who having lent Goethe his prisms and optical instruments, wrote in vain to have them returned, and was forced to send his servant with an order to bring them away. Goethe delayed and delayed, and could not bring himself to part with the platinum; and when Döbereiner, out of patience, complained to the Grand Duke, Karl August laughed and said, "Leave the old donkey in peace! you'll never get it from him. I will write to the Emperor for another."

To this may be added, that in the early *genialisch* period Goethe carried off a hundred engravings by Albrecht Dürer from Knebel's collection, to study them at leisure at home, and these engravings Knebel never saw in his own house again. Now these cases, although coming under the category of that much abused license which men permit themselves, namely, the license of borrowing books, umbrellas, and money, are not defensible, nor will I palliate them. Let the reader pass any sentence he will upon such infractions of the rule of conscientiousness; but let us not hear such things uttered as that Goethe stole a bar of gold or platinum.

With Döbereiner, he followed all the new phenomena which chemistry was then bringing before the astonished world. He also prepared his own writings on morphology for the press; and studied Greek mythology, English literature, and Gothic art. Byron's *Manfred* he reviewed in the *Kunst und Alterthum*, and enthusiastically welcomed our great poet as the greatest product of modern times. Scott also he read with ever-increasing admiration. Homer, always studied with delight, now reassumed to him that individuality which Wolff had for a time destroyed; Schubarth's *Ideen über Homer*, having brought him round once more to the belief in the existence of

"the blind old man of Scio's rocky isle."* Painting, sculpture, architecture, geology, meteorology, anatomy, optics, Oriental literature, English literature, Calderon, and the romantic school in France—these were the subjects which by turns occupied his inexhaustible activity. "Life," he says, "resembles the Sybilline Books; it becomes dearer the less there remains of it." To one who could so worthily occupy the last remaining years of a long life, they must indeed have been precious. As he grew older, he worked harder. He went less into society. To court he very seldom went. But in lieu of his going to court, the court went to him. Once every week the Grand Duchess paid him a visit, sometimes bringing with her a princely visitor, such as the late Emperor of Russia, then Grand Duke, or the King of Würtemburg. He had always something new and interesting set aside for this visit, which was doubly dear to him, because he had a tender regard for the Grand Duchess, and it pleased him to be able to show her a new engraving, medallion, book, poem, or some scientific novelty. Karl August came often, but not on particular days. He used to walk up into the simple study, and chat there as with a brother. One day Goethe had a Jena student paying him a visit; the student saw an elderly gentleman walk unannounced into the room, and quietly seat himself on a chair; the student continued his harangue, and when it was concluded, Goethe quietly said, "But I must introduce the gentlemen: his Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Saxe Weimar, Herr ——, student from Jena." Never did the student forget the embarrassment of that moment!

The first edition of *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahre* falls in this period, 1821, and as this edition is the one best known in England through Carlyle's translation, it may now be cri-

* See the little poem *Homer wider Homer*.

ticised, the more so as what was afterwards *thrown into* the book (I will not say worked into it) only made it still more fragmentary and imperfect.

There are pages in the *Wanderjahre* which he alone could have written; but I cannot bring myself to regard the whole book as anything better than a collection of sketches and studies, often incomplete, and sometimes not worth completing. It is very unequal, some parts being as feeble as others are admirable. The story of *The Man of Fifty* has capital points, and the *New Melusina* is a charming fairy tale; but much of what is symbolical seems to me only fantastic; and as a composition the work is feeble, and careless even to impertinence. Not only are the various little stories "dragged in" with the transparent artifice of juvenile productions; not only are these stories for the most part tiresome and sometimes trivial, but there is one story (*Nicht zu weit*) which, beginning with considerable animation, is actually left unfinished in the work, just as it lay unfinished in his portfolio. Observe it is not given as a fragment—the conclusion is promised, but never comes. This is an impertinence to the public; all the more remarkable as coming from a writer who thought so much of Art. He might have published the stories separately, as they were written separately; and if he could not work out the great scheme of the *Wanderjahre*, he might have left it a fragment, or left it unpublished.

It is easy for admirers of this work to cite very beautiful passages; and it is by no means difficult to read under its symbolical dulness any profound meanings the interpreter wishes to read there. But for my own part, greatly as I admire Goethe, and profoundly as his works affect me, I do not recognize in the *Wanderjahre* the old magic, nor can my

love for the writer persuade me that it is well written, well conceived, or intelligibly executed. *De gustibus.* I quarrel with no man who finds delight in the *Wanderjahre;* but candour compels me to own that I find in it almost every fault a work can have: it is unintelligible, it is tiresome, it is fragmentary, it is dull, and it is often ill-written. When particular passages are cited for their wisdom or their beauty, one is apt to fancy that one has been unjust to a strange work; but a *re*-reading of the work as a whole soon restores the original verdict. Irving said that there was more true religion in the episode of the Three Reverences than in all the theological writings of the day. And Carlyle has on more than one occasion noticed the profound wisdom which shines through many of the pages. How can it be otherwise, when Goethe is the author? But separate passages do not make a book; and to show how this book was made, a passage from Eckermann will suffice. "When he began to remodel and finish this novel, which had previously appeared in one volume,* Goethe intended to expand it into two. But as the work progressed the manuscript grew beyond expectation; and as his secretary wrote widely, Goethe was deceived, and thought he had enough for three volumes, and accordingly the manuscript went in three volumes to the publishers. However, when the printing had reached a certain point, it was found that a miscalculation had been made, and that the two last volumes were too small. The publishers sent for more manuscript, and as the course of the novel could not be altered, and it was impossible to write a new tale in the hurry of the moment, Goethe was really in some perplexity. Under these circumstances he sent for me, told me the state of the case, and mentioned how he thought of

* This is the volume Carlyle translated. See *German Romance*, vol. IV. It is superior to the expanded work.

helping himself out of the difficulty, laying before me two large bundles of manuscripts. 'In these two parcels,' said he, 'you will find various papers hitherto unpublished, detached pieces finished and unfinished; opinions on natural science, art, literature, and life, all mingled together. Suppose you were to make up from these six or eight printed sheets to fill the gaps in my *Wanderjahre*. Strictly speaking, they have nothing to do with it, but the proceeding may be justified by the fact that mention is made of an archive in Makaria's house in which such detached pieces are preserved. Thus we shall not only get over a difficulty, but find a fitting vehicle for sending a number of interesting things into the world.' I approved of the plan, set to work at once, and completed the desired arrangement in a short time. Goethe seemed well satisfied. I had put together the whole into two principal parts; one under the title 'From Makaria's Archive', the other under the title 'According to the Views of the Wanderer'. And as Goethe, at this time, had just finished two poems—one on 'Schiller's Skull', and the other *Kein Wesen kann zu Nichts zerfallen*—he was desirous to bring out these also, and we added them at the close of the two divisions. But when the *Wanderjahre* came out, no one knew what to make of it. The progress of the romance was interrupted by a number of enigmatical sayings, the explanation of which could be expected from men only of special studies, such as artists, litterati, men of science; this greatly annoyed all other readers, especially those of the fair sex. Then, as for the two poems, people could as little understand them as they could guess how they got into such a place. Goethe laughed at this."

No other criticism of the *Wanderjahre* is needed after such a story. Had Goethe stood in awe of the public, had he lived in England or France, where "Reviewers" exercise at least the

duty of Police, he would not thus have ventured to play with his own reputation and to mystify the public.

Nor did he escape without punishment even in Germany. He had mystified the public, but the public was not pleased. His friends were not pleased. No one accepted the work with satisfaction. It remained for writers of our day to see in it a social Bible—a Sybilline Book. The first symptoms of dissatisfaction came from his nearest friends; but their objections were of course mild, and were praise compared with the objections raised by his enemies. A certain Pustkuchen, a clergyman of Lieme, imitated Nicolai's parody of *Werther*, but in a serious spirit, bringing out a *Wanderjahre*, in which Goethe's views of life were held up to the execration of all good Christians. It had become the watchword of one party to say Goethe was no Christian; as it afterwards became the watchword of another party to say he was no patriot; and, finally, there came Menzel, who said he was not only no Christian, no Patriot, no Moralist, but also no Genius,—only a man of talent! Goethe contented himself with an epigram or so on Pustkuchen, and continued his way. To his opponents generally he said, "If they could judge me, I should not be the man I am."

Hätten sie mich beurtheilen können
So wär' ich nicht was ich bin.

And the barking of the curs, he said, which follows us as we leave the stable, proves nothing more than that we are on horseback:

Es bellt der Spitz aus unserm Stall
Und will uns stets begleiten.
Und seiner lauten Stimme Schall
Beweist nur dass wir reiten.

While a strong feeling of opposition was growing up in his

own nation, a feeling which such works as the *Wanderjahre* was not likely to mitigate, his fame began to extend to Italy, England, and France. His active interest in the important productions of foreign literature, was reciprocated in the admiration expressed for him by men like Manzoni, Scott, Byron, Carlyle, Stapfer, Ampère, Soret, and others. He had written of Manzoni's *Carmagnola*, defending it against adverse criticism, with a fervour which, according to Manzoni, secured his reputation in Europe. "It is certain that I owe to Goethe's admiration all the praise I have received. I was very ill treated until he so nobly defended me, and since then I have not only seen public opinion change, but I myself have learned to look at my productions in a new light." How profound was his admiration for Byron, and how flattered Byron was by it, is well known. The poem he sent to Byron, in answer to the dedication of *Werner*, reached him just as he was setting out on the expedition to Greece.

Nor was his activity confined to reading. Oersted's magnificent discovery of electro-magnetism awakened his keenest interest. He made Döbereiner illustrate the phenomena, and shortly afterwards had Oersted to visit him. D'Alton's anatomical work on the Sloth and Mammoth found him as ready as a young reviewer to proclaim its importance to the world. He wrote also the account of his *Campaign in France;* the *Annals* of his Life; Essays on Art; smaller poems; the epigrams *Zahme Xenien;* translated modern Greek songs; and sketched a restoration of the lost drama, *Phaëton*, by Euripides.

It is evident then that there was abundant life in the old Jupiter, whose frame was still massive and erect; whose brow had scarcely a wrinkle of old age; whose head was still as free from baldness as ever; and whose large brown eyes had still that flashing splendour which distinguished them.

Hufeland, the physician, who had made a special study of the human organization with reference to its powers of vitality, says, that never did he meet with a man in whom bodily and mental organization were so perfect as in Goethe. Not only was the prodigious strength of vitality remarkable in him, but equally so the perfect *balance* of functions. "One can truly say that his distinguishing characteristic was the harmony with which all mental faculties worked together, so that his creative Imagination was always under the control of his Reason; and the same is true of his physical faculties: no function was predominant, all worked together for the continuance of a marvellous balance. But *productivity* was the fundamental character of his bodily and mental organization; and the former showed itself in a rich nutritive power, a rapid sanguinification and reproduction. He made much blood even as an old man." Not only life, but the life of life, the power of loving was still preserved to him. *Quisquis amat, nulla est conditione senex,* says old Pontanus; and the Marquis de Lassy prettily makes the loss of love-dreams a sign of the last sleep:—"Hélas, quand on commence à ne plus rêver, ou plutôt à rêver moins, on est près de s'endormir pour toujours." In the seventy-fourth year of his age, Goethe had still youth enough to love. At Marienbad he met with a Fräulein von Lewezow. A passion grew up between them, which, returned on her side with almost equal vehemence, brought back to him once more the exaltation of the *Werther* period. It was thought he would marry her, and indeed he wished to do so; but the representations of his friends, and perhaps the fear of ridicule, withheld him. He tore himself away; and the Marienbad Elegy, which he wrote in the carriage as it whirled him away, remains as a token of the passion and his suffering.

Nor does the Fräulein von Lewezow appear to have been the

only one captivated by the "old man eloquent". Madame Szymanowska, according to Zelter, was "madly in love" with him; and however figurative such a phrase may be, it indicates, coming from so grave a man as Zelter, a warmth of enthusiasm one does not expect to see excited by a man of seventy-four.

On the 7th of November 1825, Goethe, who had a few weeks before prepared a Jubilee for the fiftieth anniversary of Karl August's reign, was in turn honoured by a Jubilee celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of his arrival at Weimar. "At dawn of day, when he opened the shutters of his bedroom, the first sound that met his ears was a morning song, sung by voices concealed in his garden. His first glance fell on the various tasteful gifts of neat-handed friends. At half-past eight all the carriages in the town were in motion; all persons of consideration in court and city were in pilgrimage to the poet's house. A party of musicians, and fourteen female friends, had assembled in his salon, to perform a morning ode written by Professor Riemer, and set to music by Eberwein. At nine, when Goethe was conducted from his study by a friend and his own son, the crowd in every room was so great that they were obliged to lead him unobserved by a side entrance. Scarcely was that honoured head beheld than the music began, and heightened the emotion which beamed from all eyes. The nymphs of the Ilm greeted the golden day of their faithful poet, and sang his immortality. The whole throng of auditors was deeply affected. The tones melted away in solemn silence. With modest dignity, the venerable man turned to his friends and expressed his thanks by eloquent pressure of the hands and affectionate words. Baron von Fritsch then stepped forward, and delivered the autograph letter of the Duke, and the golden medal which had been secretly struck in Berlin: it bore the likeness of Karl

August and Luise on one side; on the other, the laurel-crowned head of the poet; the names of Karl August and Luise were engraved on the rim.

"Goethe, who expected some memorial worthy of the giver, held both for some time unopened in silent emotion. The various deputations now advanced. There were deputations from Jena, Weimar, Eisenach, and from the Lodge of Freemasons. The Jena students addressed him through two deputies.

"Shortly after ten, Karl August and Luise came to offer their congratulations. They remained with him an hour alone; when the hereditary Grand Duke and Grand Duchess, with their two Princesses, arrived. Meanwhile the ministers of state, the chiefs of the courts of justice, the most distinguished persons of the court, and the deputations had collected together; the principal ladies of Weimar, among whom were the daughters and grand-daughters of Wieland and Herder, assembled in an upper room. As soon as all the invited had arrived, they were conducted, two by two, into the great room in which were placed the statue of the Grand Duke and Rauch's bust of Goethe, on a handsome pedestal, with a laurel crown beside it. Just as the procession reached the centre of the hall, music was heard from the galleries. The effect of this harmony in the lofty and beautiful hall, decorated with the busts and portraits, was indescribable.

"At two o'clock a banquet was prepared for more than two hundred persons in the hall of the Stadthaus. In the evening *Iphigenia* was performed at the theatre. At the end of the third act, Goethe, warned by his physician, retired; and now a beautiful conclusion to this extraordinary day awaited him. A serenade was performed in front of his house by the orchestral band of the Grand Ducal Chapel. Hummel had

with great feeling and taste combined the triumphal March in Titus, Glück's overture to Iphigenia, and a masterly Adagio of his own, with an echo for horns. The opening expressed the triumphant glories of the day, while the melting tones of the Adagio seemed to invite to the tranquillity which follows the accomplishment of work.

"All the houses in the *Frauenplan,* where Goethe lived, were illuminated. A numerous company repaired to his house, where an elegant entertainment awaited them, and Goethe remained one hour with his guests before retiring for the night. This day was likewise celebrated at Leipsic and Frankfurt. In Frankfurt the consul general Bethmann marked the day by placing in his museum a statue of Goethe, as large as life, which Rauch had executed for him."*

Reading this, and such anecdotes as the one formerly narrated about the Landtag, how can we wonder if the man, who was treated so like a god, adopted something of the imperiousness and assumption of the part thus thrust upon him?

In the following year Germany showed her gratitude to him by a privilege which in itself is the severest sarcasm on German nationality—the privilege, namely, of a protection of his copyright. He announced a complete edition of his works, and the *Bundestag* undertook to secure him from piracy in German cities! Until that time his works had enriched booksellers; but this tardy privilege secured an inheritance for his children.

In the way of honours, he was greatly flattered by the letter which Walter Scott sent to him, in expression of an old admiration; and on the 28th of August, 1827, Karl August came into his study accompanied by the King of Bavaria, who

* These details and many others are given in *Goethe's Goldener Jubeltag.* Weimar: 1826. I have abridged the abridgement given by Mrs. Austin, *Goethe and his Contemporaries,* vol. III.

brought with him the Order of the Grand Cross as a homage. In strict etiquette a subject was not allowed to accept such an Order without his own sovereign granting permission, and Goethe, ever punctilious, turned to the Grand Duke, saying: "If my gracious sovereign permits." Upon which the Duke called out: "*Du alter Kerl! mache doch kein dummes Zeug!* Come, old fellow, no nonsense."

On the 6th January, 1827, the Frau von Stein died, in her eighty-fifth year.

And now the good old Duke was to be taken from him whom he affectionately styled his *Waffenbruder*—his brother in arms. On the 14th of June, 1828, he was no more. Humboldt's letter to Goethe contains so interesting an account of the Duke's last hours, that some sentences may here be cited: "As if this great brightness, as with the lofty snow-capped Alps were the forerunner of departing light, never have I seen the great humane prince more animated, more intelligent, more mild, more sympathizing with the further development of the people than in the last days when we had him here. I frequently said to my friends, anxiously and full of misgivings, that this animation, this mysterious clearness of intellect, combined with so much bodily weakness, was to me a fearful phenomenon. He himself evidently vacillated between hope of recovery and expectation of the great catastrophe. In Potsdam I sat many hours with him. He drank and slept alternately, then drank again, then rose to write to his consort, and then slept again. He was cheerful, but much exhausted. In the intervals he overpowered me with the most difficult questions upon physics, astronomy, meteorology and geology; upon the atmosphere of the moon; upon the coloured double stars; upon the influence of the spots in the sun upon temperature; upon the appearance of organized forms in the primitive world; and upon the internal warmth of the earth.

He slept at intervals during his discourse and mine, was often restless, and then said, kindly excusing his apparent inattention, 'You see, Humboldt, it is all over with me!' Suddenly he began to talk desultorily upon religious matters. He regretted the increase of pietism, and the connexion of this species of fanaticism with a tendency towards political absolutism, and the suppression of all free mental action. 'Then,' he exclaimed, 'there are false-hearted fellows, who think that by means of pietism they can make themselves agreeable to princes, and obtain places and ribbons. They have smuggled themselves in with a poetical predilection for the middle ages.' His anger soon abated, and he said that he found much consolation in the Christian religion. 'It is a humane doctrine,' said he, 'but has been distorted from the beginning. The first Christians were the free thinkers among the ultras.'"

Knowing Goethe's love for the Duke, his friends entertained great fears that the shock of this event would be terrible. He was seated at dinner when the news arrived. It was whispered from one to the other. At length it was gently broken to him. They were breathless with suspense. But his face remained quite calm—a calmness which betrayed him. "Ah! this is very sad," he sighed; "let us change the subject." He might banish the subject from conversation, he could not banish it from his thoughts. It affected him deeply; all the more so, because he did not give expression to his grief. "*Nun ist alles vorbei!* Nothing now remains," he said. When Eckermann came in the evening, he found him utterly prostrate.*

* The calmness with which he received the terrible announcement recalls those grand scenes in Marston's *Malcontent* and Ford's *Broken Heart*, where the subordination of emotion to the continuance of offices of politeness rises into sublimity. Herodotus has touched the same chord in his narrative of the terrific story of Thyestes (*Clio*, 119). Harpagus on discovering that he has feasted on his own children in the banquet set before him by Thyestes

Retiring to the pleasant scenes of Dornburg, the old man strove in work and in contemplation of nature to call away his thoughts from his painful loss. The next year—1829—he finished the *Wanderjahre* in the form it now assumes, worked at the Second Part of *Faust*, and in conjunction with a young Frenchman, Soret, who was occupied translating the *Metamorphoses of Plants*, revised his scientific papers.

In February 1830, the death of the Grand Duchess once more overshadowed the evening of his life. These clouds gathering so fast are significant warnings of the Night which hurries on for him—"the Night in which no man can work!"

Before narrating the last days of this long career, it will be necessary to say something of the *Second Part of Faust*, which was not indeed finally completed until the 20th July 1831, but which may be noticed here to avoid interruption of the closing scene.

remains quite calm. Shakspeare has expressed the true philosophy of the matter in his usual pregnant language:

> "Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak
> Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break."

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECOND PART OF FAUST.

In the presence of this poem, I feel more embarrassment than with any other of Goethe's works. Difficult as the task was in each instance to convey an adequate idea of the work before me, and to give expression to the critical opinions formed respecting it, that difficulty becomes complicated in the present instance by the consciousness of the opposition existing between a certain class of admirers and myself, a class not of ignorant, prejudiced readers, but of enlightened and ingenious intellects. These admirers speak of the *Second Part of Faust* as a work of transcendent merit, surpassing all that Goethe has done, a storehouse of profound and mystic philosophy, a miracle of execution. Others again, and these among Goethe's most loving students, declare it to be of mediocre interest, very far inferior to the *First Part*, and both in conception and execution an elaborate mistake. And of these I am one. I have tried to understand the work; tried to place myself at the right point of view for perfect enjoyment; but repeated trials, instead of clearing up obscurities and deepening enjoyment, as with the other works, have more and more confirmed my first impressions. Now although it needs but little

experience to suggest that the fault may be wholly mine, "the most legible hand," as Goethe says, "being illegible in the twilight"; although I might learn from what I have felt, and from what others have felt about the *First Part*, not to be hasty in pronouncing judgment, nevertheless I must express my real convictions, and not withhold them on the chance that future enlightenment may cause me to alter them. What Channing says of opinions generally, is applicable to critical opinions: we are answerable for their *uprightness*, not for their *rightness*.

Moreover, comparing the impressions produced by *Faust* and by the *Second Part*, although it is true that in both cases a sense of disappointment is created, the kind of objection made to each is entirely different. In *Faust*, a want of familiarity with the work may cause it to appear fragmentary, discordant, irreverent, not sufficiently metaphysical, and so forth; but a single reading is enough to impress us with a sense of its interest, its pathos, its poetry, its strongly-marked character. In other words, the substance of the work lays hold of us; it is only details of the execution upon which criticism exercises itself. If we think it fragmentary, the fragments are at any rate of deep significance. If we think it deficient in "taste", we never reproach it with want of power. The reverse is the case with this *Second Part*. Our objections are not raised by the details; but by the body of the poem; it is not the execution, but the whole conception, both in respect to the story itself, and to the mode of working out that story. What is the consequence? The consequence is that familiarity with *Faust* removes our objections and intensifies our admiration; but familiarity with the *Second Part* confirms our objections, and teaches us why.

If we remember that all Goethe's works are biographical,

are parts of his life, and expressions of the various experiences he underwent, and the various stages of culture he passed through, there will be a peculiar interest in examining this product of his old age; and at the same time the reader will see the motive which made me reserve for this chapter what has to be said on the *Second Part*, instead of affixing it to the criticism of the *First Part;* for indeed the two poems are two, not two parts of one poem; the interval between them in conception and treatment is as wide as the interval of years between their composition. Taking up the biographical clue, we have seen in previous chapters the gradual development of a tendency towards mysticism and over-reflectiveness, which, visible as a germ in his earliest years, grew with his growth, and expanded in the later years till its overgrowth shadowed and perplexed his more vigorous concrete tendencies, and made this clearest and most spontaneous of poets as fond of symbols as a priest of Isis. To those—and they are many—who think the aim and purpose of Art is to create symbols for Philosophy, this development will be prized as true progress. Others who do not thus subordinate the artist to the thinker, must regard the encroachment of Reflection as a sign of decay. It is quite true that Modern Art, as representative of the complexity of Modern Life, demands a large admixture of Reflection; but the predominance of the reflective tendency is a sign of decay. It is true that for an organism of a certain degree of complexity, an internal osseous structure is necessary; but the increase of ossification is cause and consequent of decay of vital power.

With the two parts of *Faust* we have very much the same critical questions to debate as with the earlier and later books of *Wilhelm Meister;* questions too wide and deep for thorough discussion here, and which I must content myself with indicating

One cardinal consideration must, however, be brought forward, which lies at the very basis of all argument on the subject. It is this: If the artist desire to express certain philosophic conceptions by means of symbols, he must never forget that, Art being Representation, the symbols chosen must possess *in themselves* a charm independent of what they mean. The forms which are his materials, the symbols which are his language, must in themselves have a beauty, and an interest, readily appreciable by those who do not understand the occult meaning. Unless they have this they cease to be Art; they become hieroglyphs. Art is picture-painting, not picture-writing. Beethoven, in his Symphonies, may have expressed grand psychological conceptions, which, for the mind that interprets them, may give an extra charm to strains of ravishment; but if the strains in themselves do not possess a magic, if they do not sting the soul with a keen delight, then let the meaning be never so profound, it will pass unheeded, because the *primary requisite* of music is not that it shall present grand thoughts, but that it shall agitate the soul with musical emotions. The poet who has only profound meanings, and not the witchery which is to carry his expression of those meanings home to our hearts, has failed. The primary requisite of poetry is that it shall move us; not that it shall instruct us.

The *Second Part of Faust*, if the foregoing be correct, is a failure, because it fails in the primary requisite of a poem. Whatever else it may be, no one will say it is interesting. The scenes, incidents, and characters do not *in themselves* carry that overpowering charm which masters us in the First Part. They borrow their interest from the meanings they are supposed to symbolize. Only in proportion to your ingenuity in guessing the riddle is your interest excited by the means. Mephisto, formerly so marvellous a creation, has become a mere

mouthpiece; Faust has lost all trace of individuality, every pulse of emotion. The philosophic critics will point out how this change is necessary, because in the *Second Part* all that was individual has become universal. But this is only a description, not a justification; it is dignifying failure with a philosophic purpose. Goethe has himself declared this to have been his intention: "I could not help wondering," he says, "that none of those who undertook a continuation and completion of my fragment should have conceived the idea, which seemed so obvious, that the Second Part must necessarily be carried into a more elevated sphere, conducting Faust into higher regions under worthier circumstances." Right enough: but in changing the ground there was no necessity for such a change of treatment; to conduct Faust into a higher region it was not necessary to displace the struggles of an individual by representative abstractions; above all, it was not necessary to forsake the real domain of Art for that of Philosophy, and sacrifice beauty to meaning. The defect of this poem does not lie in its occult meanings, but in the poverty of poetic life those meanings are made to animate. No matter how occult the meaning, so that the picture be fine. A lion may be the symbol of wakefulness, of strength, of kingliness, of solitariness, and of many other things, according to the arbitrary fancy of the artist; and it matters comparatively little whether we rightly or wrongly interpret his meaning; but his lion must be finely executed, must excite our admiration *as* a lion, if we are to consider it a work of Art. We do not understand the *First Part of Faust;* over its *meaning* critics battle, and will battle perhaps for ever; but they are tolerably unanimous respecting its beauty. The passion, poetry, sarcasm, fancy, wisdom, and thrilling thoughts as from some higher world; the pathos and naïveté of Gretchen; the cruel coldness of Mephisto; the an-

guish of the restless student; these are what all understand, and, understanding, enjoy. We may baffle ourselves with the mystery; we all are enchanted with the picture. We are moved by it as children are moved while reading the *Pilgrim's Progress*, believing all its allegorical persons and incidents to be real. When the child grows older, and learns to read beneath the allegory a series of grand representative abstractions, a new enjoyment is added; but even then the enjoyment depends less on the meaning than on the form. In all attempts at allegory which make the meaning prominent, and neglect the form, the effect is cold, lifeless, uninteresting. Allegory which has been said to tell the story of a mind while seeming to tell the story of a life, is only acceptable on the condition of its story being interesting in itself. The *Second Part of Faust* fails in this first requisite; you must have the key to it. There is no direct appeal to the emotions. There is no intrinsic beauty in the symbols. In saying this I speak of it as a whole; in detail there are many passages of exquisite beauty, some lines of profound thought, and some happy sarcasm; but there is no incident, no character, no one scene which lives in the memory like the incidents, characters, and scenes of the *First Part*.

The work opens with Faust on a flowery turf trying to calm his restlessness in sleep. It is twilight, and around him hover celestial spirits. Ariel sings, accompanied by an Æolian harp; the other spirits join in chorus, and Faust, awakened by the sun-rise, pours forth his feelings in beautiful verse. This may represent the awakening from the dark Night of his soul which has followed on the death of Margaret, and which now vanishes as Time, the consoler, brings round the Day, and as the fresh morning air inspires fresh energies.

> Du regst und rührst ein kräftiges Beschliessen
> Zum höchsten Daseyn immerfort zu streben.

The scene changes to the Emperor's Court. Things are in a bad state. The Lord Chancellor complains that the laws are disregarded; the Generalissimo complains of the army; and the First Lord of the Treasury complains of the empty exchequer. This is a very amusing scene, full of sarcasm and sly wisdom. Mephisto appears in the guise of a Court Fool, and the Emperor asks his advice. Gold, says Mephisto, is abundant in the earth, and can be brought to light by man's nature and spiritual power. No sooner are these words Nature and Spirit pronounced than the Lord Chancellor, with sensitive orthodoxy prescient of heresy, exclaims:

> Natur und Geist—so spricht man nicht zu Christen.
> Desshalb verbrennt man Atheisten.

"Nature and Spirit—words not fit for Christian ears. It is for such words we burn Atheists." He adds, that there are but two classes who worthily support the throne:—the clergy and aristocracy: they withstand the storm,—and take Church and State in payment of their services. The fun of this scene would be more relished if it were visibly woven into the plot; but one fails to see any connecting link, the more so as Faust is not even present. The next scene is equally obscure. It is a mask got up for the Emperor, and is as wild and variegated as may be. It contains some light happy verses and some satire, on the follies of Literature; quotable passages abound; but the reader is bewildered. The next scene is the Emperor's pleasure grounds: a satire on Law's scheme of paper money is introduced. Mephisto has declared man's mind will bring money to light; and this is proved by man resolving to attach the value of gold to paper. The people, thus suddenly enriched with cheap wealth, run into the wildest extravagances. Fine material for the commentator here; but the reader is not

greatly elated. In the next scene, Faust has drawn Mephistopheles apart, much to the devil's surprise, who asks him if there has not been amusement enough for him in the motley throng; but Faust has promised the Emperor to show him Helen of Troy, and calls upon Mephisto to fulfil that promise. Mephisto says he has no power over the heathen world; and Helen is not so easily brought on the stage as paper money is. But there is nevertheless a way: Faust must seek The Mothers who dwell in terrible solitudes:

Ins Unbetretene
Nicht zu Betretende.

What The Mothers *are* has not yet been made clear to me; and what German Commentators prove them to be, I must leave the bewildered reader to seek for himself. Faust departs. The scene changes, and again presents the court. Mephisto there removes the freckles from a fair one's face, cures another of lameness, gives a philtre to a third. The lights begin to burn dimly in the hall, and the spectacle commences. Faust appears on the stage and calls up Paris, who is variously criticized by the company; then Helen appears, and Mephisto, who sees her for the first time, confesses she is beautiful, but not exactly to his taste. But Faust is in uncontrollable rapture, and expresses what may be interpreted as the feelings of a German Artist brought into the presence of Grecian Art. He is jealous of Paris, and interferes. Then follows an explosion: the spirits disappear, and Faust is borne off senseless by Mephisto. Thus closes the first act.

If we disregard for a moment the symbolical significance of these scenes, and the occasional charm of the writing, there will be little to admire; and this consideration is all important, because even if the symbolism be accepted by us, as it is by

certain critics; if we marvel at the profound thought and searching sarcasm underlying the phantasmagoria, we are still only admiring the Philosopher, and have not the Artist before us; we are praising the poem for other than poetic qualities. Nor must we be surprised if readers, who do not perceive the meaning intended to be conveyed, or seeing it, do not highly esteem it, are lukewarm in their admiration.

In the second act Faust is discovered lying in bed in his old Study, Mephisto by his side. A servant comes in, from whom we learn that Wagner has taken Faust's place, and acquired almost as great a reputation. He has long been busied in attempts to discover the vital principle, by means of which he will create a man. Our old friend the Student now enters; he whom Mephisto instructed years ago. He is an Idealist, and presents an occasion for some quizzing of Fichte's philosophy. We are then led into Wagner's laboratory. He has just completed his manufacture of an Homunculus, which he keeps in a bottle. Very admirable writing there is in this scene; especially quaint and characteristic is the language of Wagner, who, in the pride of science, declares the old methods of generation to be idle and frivolous:

> Wie sonst das Zeugen Mode war
> Erklären wir für eitel Possen.

It may be all very well for animals, but man with his high gifts must have a purer, higher origin.

The Homunculus, however, turns out to be an imp, and a very irreverent imp, who undertakes to instruct Mephisto, and conducts him and Faust into the Classical Walpurgis Night, which occupies the rest of the act. This Walpurgis Night, which is a classical pendant to the Brocken scene in the *First Part*, is a sort of olla podrida. It contains the gathered frag-

ments of many years, thrown together without much care, and with infinite obscurity. It is an inexhaustible field for Commentators. A capital touch is that of making Mephisto feel quite a stranger among the classical figures, and very humorous his disapprobation of the Antique Nude!

> Zwar sind auch wir von Herzen unanständig,
> *Doch das Antike find' ich zu lebendig!*

In the Brocken scene of the *First Part* we had the German world of Witchcraft, and the German ideal of female loveliness and simplicity in Gretchen. In this *Second Part* we have the Classical world of Supernaturalism, and the Greek ideal of loveliness in Helen. The third act is occupied with *Helena*, which was originally published as a separate poem, and was reviewed at some length by Carlyle in the *Foreign Review*.* He says of it truly enough that "it by no means carries its significance written on its forehead, so that he who runs may read; but, on the contrary, it is enveloped in a certain mystery, under coy disguises, which to hasty readers may be not only offensively obscure, but altogether provoking and impenetrable." We should not quarrel with its obscurity, if the opaque forms themselves had transcendent beauty; an alabaster vase may give as much delight as a vase of crystal. Carlyle, indeed, is forced to add that the "outward meaning seems unsatisfactory enough, were it not that ever and anon we are reminded of a cunning, manifold meaning which lies hidden under it; and incited by capricious beckonings to evolve this more and more completely from its quaint concealment." The question at issue here rests entirely on the share to be allotted to Meaning in a work of Art. Carlyle refers to Bunyan as "nowise our best theologian; neither unhappily is theology our most at-

* Subsequently reprinted in his *Miscellanies*, vol. I.

tractive science; yet which of our compends and treatises, nay which of our romances and poems, lives in such mild sunshine as the good old *Pilgrim's Progress* in the memory of so many men." But this, if I have not altogether mistaken the point, is a condemnation; for who can say that the memories of men are fondly occupied with the *Second Part of Faust* in general, or with *Helena* in particular?

But while I am thus thrown into a position of antagonism both with respect to the work itself and to its eulogists, I must guard against the supposition of not admiring this *Helena*. The style of Art is one which requires for perfect success qualities absent from the whole *Second Part;* but no lover of poetry will fail to recognize the poetry and the charm here to a great degree thrown away. To those who love riddles, to those who love interpretations, the work is inexhaustible; to those who love beautiful verses, and glimpses of a deeply meditative mind, the work is, and always will be, attractive; but those who open it expecting a masterpiece will, I think, be perpetually disappointed. Some minds will be delighted with the allegorical Helen embracing Faust, and in the embrace leaving only her veil and vest behind, her body vanishing into thin air—typical of what must ever be the embrace of the defunct Classical with the living Romantic, the resuscitated Past with the actual Present—and in their delight at the recognition of the meaning, will write chapters of commentary. But the kiss of Gretchen is worth a thousand allegories!

The analysis need not be prolonged, the more so as nothing worthy of special notice occurs in the two last acts. Faust, who has viewed many of the aspects of life, is now grown jealous of the encroachments of the sea, and determines to shut it out. He is old, sad, reflective. Four grey old

women—Want, Guilt, Misery, and Care—appear to him. On Care asking him if he has ever known her, he answers: "I have gone through the world, seized every enjoyment by the hair—that which did not satisfy me I let go, that which ran away from me I would not follow. I have only wished and realized my wish, and wished again, and thus have stormed through life: first great and mighty; but now I take things wisely and soberly. I know enough of this life, and of the world to come we have no clear prospect. A fool is he who directs his blinking eyes *that* way, and imagines creatures like himself above the clouds! Let him stand firm and look around him here, the world is not dumb to the man of real sense. What need is there for him to sweep eternity? All he can know lies within his grasp." These concluding words contain Goethe's own philosophy, and I must quote the original:

Thor! wer dorthin die Augen blinzend richtet
Sich über Wolken seines Gleichen dichtet!
Er stehe fest und sehe hier sich um;
Dem Tüchtigen ist diese Welt nicht stumm.
Was braucht er in die Ewigkeit zu schweifen!
Was er erkennt lässt sich ergreifen.

Faust refusing to recognize the omnipotence of Care, she breathes on him, and blinds him; but, blind though he be, he resolves that the work he has planned shall be concluded. "A marsh," he says, "extends along the mountain's foot, infecting all that is already won: to draw off the noisome pool would be a crowning success. I lay open a space for many millions to dwell upon, not safely it is true, but in free activity. * * * Yes, heart and soul am I devoted to this wish; this is the last resolve of wisdom. He only deserves freedom and life who is daily compelled to conquer them for himself; and thus here, hemmed round by danger, bring childhood, manhood, and old

age their well-spent years to a close. I would fain see such a busy multitude stand upon free soil with free people. I might then say to the moment, 'Stay, thou art fair!' The trace of my earthly days cannot perish in centuries. In the presentiment of such exalted bliss, I now enjoy the most exalted moment." He has thus said to the passing moment, "Stay! thou art fair", and with this he expires.

Venit summa dies et ineluctabile fatum,—

the troubled career is closed. And as far as the problem of *Faust* can receive a solution more general than the one indicated at the close of the criticism on the *First Part*, the solution is I think given in this dying speech: the toiling soul, after trying in various directions of *individual* effort and *individual* gratification, and finding therein no peace, is finally conducted to the recognition of the vital truth that man lives for man, and that only in as far as he is working for Humanity can his efforts bring permanent happiness.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CLOSING SCENES.

The spring of 1830 found Goethe in his eighty-first year, busy with *Faust*, writing the preface to Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*, and deeply interested in the great philosophical contest which was raging in Paris, between Cuvier and Geoffroy St. Hilaire, on the question of Unity of Composition in the Animal Kingdom. This question, one of the most important and profound of all the questions which are agitated in Biology, which lies indeed at the bottom of almost all speculation on Development, had for very many years been answered by Goethe in the spirit which he now saw Geoffroy St. Hilaire advocating; and it was to him a matter of keen delight to observe the world of science earnestly bent on a solution of the question. The anecdote which M. Soret narrates in the supplemental volume to Eckermann's conversations, is very characteristic.

"Monday, 1st August 1830. The news of the Revolution of July reached Weimar to-day, and set every one in commotion. I went in the course of the afternoon to Goethe. 'Now,' exclaimed he, as I entered, 'what do you think of this great event? The volcano has come to an eruption; everything is in flames.' 'A frightful story,' I answered; 'but what could be

expected otherwise under such notoriously bad circumstances and with such a ministry, than that the whole would end in the expulsion of the royal family.' 'We do not appear to understand each other, my good friend,' said Goethe; 'I am not speaking of those people, but of something quite different. I am speaking of the contest so important for science between Cuvier and Geoffroy St. Hilaire, which has come to an open rupture in the Academy.' This expression of Goethe's was so unexpected that I did not know what to say, and for some minutes was perfectly at a standstill. 'The matter is of the highest importance,' he continued; 'and you can form no conception of what I felt at the intelligence of the *séance* of the 19th July. We have now in Geoffroy a powerful and permanent ally. I see how great must be the interest of the French scientific world in this affair; because notwithstanding the terrible political commotion, the *séance* of the 19th July was very fully attended. However, the best of it is that the synthetic manner of looking at Nature, introduced by Geoffroy into France, cannot be kept back any longer. From the present time Mind will rule over Matter in the scientific investigations of the French. There will be glances of the great maxims of creation—of the mysterious workshop of God! Besides, what is all intercourse with Nature, if we merely occupy ourselves with individual material parts, and do not feel the breath of the spirit which prescribes to every part its direction, and orders or sanctions every deviation by means of an inherent law! I have exerted myself in this great question for fifty years. At first I was alone, then I found support, and now at last to my great joy I am surpassed by congenial minds.'"

Those familiar with the grand conception of Nature which lies at the bottom of this doctrine of Unity of Composition,

will, even if they reject the doctrine, understand its fascination for poetical minds. Indeed another great artist, then in the early prime of genius and success, who had no scientific training, and no special knowledge, but only a love of great ideas and a sincere desire to penetrate into the spirit of Nature, was also led to take the interest of a partizan in Geoffroy St. Hilaire's doctrine. I allude to George Sand. There is a letter from her to Geoffroy, printed where no one would ever think of seeking for it,* which is too curious to be passed over. An extract or two may well stand here in parallel to the passage just quoted from Goethe: "Je ne vous dirai point que vous avez vaincu la science et le génie de C. (Cuvier), je dis seulement que j'ai peut-être assez bien compris la discussion pour savoir de quel côté se portent mes sympathies et ma confiance. En cela je ne crois pas être influencé par les bontés que vous avez eues pour moi; mais il y a quelque chose de plus grand, de plus hardi, de plus sincère et (permettez moi de parler la langue de ma profession) de plus poétique dans vos larges vues sur ce que nous appelons la création. . . . Ce que je puis vous assurer c'est que l'œuvre de vos sept jours est une pensée large et magnifique, et qu'elle jette à bas la génèse de C. pour quiconque déteste le mesquin dans les arts. Mais pardonnez moi ces façons de parler; vous savez que devant un tableau d'Apelle un cordonnier ne vit que le soulier, et si jugea-t-il assez ce soulier. . . . Il y a déjà long temps qu'ayant non pas lu, mais entendu raisonner de vos idées dans le public, je m'étais tellement passionné pour votre nouveau plan de l'univers, que j'avais écrit quelques pages vraiment absurdes, comme peut l'être la traduction d'une langue qu'on ne sait point. . . . Sur ce, pardonnez moi, monsieur, d'être un disciple si indigne, mais

* In *L'Histoire de la Génération de l'Homme*, by Grinaud de Caux and Martin de St. Ange. Paris: 1837, p. 430.

sachez bien que je me prosterne devant les savants comme devant les pères spirituels du genre humain. *Eux seuls entraînent les siècles et font avancer l'intelligence de notre race dans ses voies lentes et pénibles. Les hommes d'action marchent à leur suite sans le savoir*, et, subissant l'influence mystérieuse, font les lois humaines dans une sorte de rapport avec les lois divines pénétrées par les savants."

In this final sentence George Sand indicates Goethe's own view of the superior importance of such an event as the discussion between Geoffroy and Cuvier, to the more noisy but intrinsically less remarkable event, the Revolution of July; a view which will be accepted by most philosophers, and rejected by all politicians. Goethe was not content with expressing in conversation his sense of its importance; he also commenced the writing of his celebrated review of the discussion, and finished the first part in September.

In November another great affliction smites him: it is the last he has to bear: the news arrives that his only son, who had a little while before gone to Italy in failing health, had died in Rome on the 28th of October. The sorrowing father strove, as usual, to master all expression of emotion, and to banish it by restless work. But vain was the effort to live down this climbing sorrow. The trial nearly cost him his life. A violent hæmorrhage in the lungs was the result. He was at one time given over; but he rallied again, and set once more to work, completing the *Autobiography* and continuing *Faust*.

Ottilie von Goethe, the widow of his son, and his great favourite, devoted herself to cheer his solitude. She read Plutarch aloud to him; and this, with Niebuhr's Roman History, carried him amid the great pageantries of the past, where his antique spirit could wander as among friends. Nor

was the present disregarded. He read with the eagerness of youth whatever was produced by remarkable writers, such as Béranger, Victor Hugo, Delavigne, Scott, or Carlyle. He received the homage of Europe; his rooms were constantly brightened by the presence of illustrious visitors, among whom the English were always welcome.

Rambling over the wild moors, with thoughts oftentimes as wild and dreary as those moors, the young Carlyle, who had been cheered through his struggling sadness, and strengthened for the part he was to play in life, by the beauty and the wisdom which Goethe had revealed to him, suddenly conceived the idea that it would be a pleasant and a fitting thing if some of the few admirers in England forwarded to Weimar a trifling token of their admiration. On reaching home, Mrs. Carlyle at once sketched the design of a seal to be engraved: the serpent of eternity encircling a star, with the words *ohne Hast ohne Rast* (unhasting, unresting), in allusion to the well-known verses

Wie das Gestirn,
Ohne Hast
Aber ohne Rast,
Drehe sich jeder
Um die eigne Last.

"Like a star, unhasting, unresting, be each one fulfilling his God-given hest." Fifteen English admirers subscribed to have a handsome seal made, on the golden belt of which was engraved: *To the German Master: From friends in England: 28th August*, 1831. This letter accompanied it.

"*To the Poet Goethe, on the 28th August*, 1831.

"Sir,—Among the friends whom this so interesting Anniversary calls round you, may we English friends, in thought and symbolically, since personally it is impossible, present our-

selves to offer you our affectionate congratulations. We hope you will do us the honour to accept this little Birthday Gift, which, as a true testimony of our feelings, may not be without value.

"We said to ourselves: As it is always the highest duty, and pleasure, to show reverence where reverence is due, and our chief, perhaps our only benefactor, is he who by act and word instructs us in wisdom; so we, undersigned, feeling towards the Poet Goethe as the spiritually-taught towards their spiritual teacher, are desirous to express that sentiment openly and in common; for which end we have determined to solicit his acceptance of a small English gift, proceeding from us all equally, on his approaching birthday; so that while the venerable man still dwells among us, some memorial of the gratitude we owe him, and think the whole world owes him, may not be wanting.

"And thus our little tribute, perhaps among the purest that men could offer to man, now stands in visible shape, and begs to be received. May it be welcome, and speak permanently of a most close relation, though wide seas flow between the parties!

"We pray that many years may be added to a life so glorious, that all happiness may be yours, and strength given to accomplish your high task, even as it has hitherto proceeded, like a star, without haste yet without rest.

"We remain, Sir, your friends and servants,

"FIFTEEN ENGLISHMEN."*

The sentiment expressed in this letter, which everyone will

* The names of these Englishmen, as far as I have been able to ascertain, are Carlyle and his brother Dr. Carlyle, Walter Scott, Lockhart, Wordsworth, Southey, Churchill, Frazer, Professor Wilson, Jerdan, Heraud, Lord Leveson Gower, and Procter (Barry Cornwall).

see comes from Carlyle, namely, the reverence felt for the spiritual teacher by the spiritually-taught, is a manifestation that Goethe's teaching had already borne fruit, and that even in distant lands men discerned the quality in which his works are pre-eminent above those of any modern writer—the quality of deep and far-reaching insight.

The English tribute was extremely gratifying, because for England and Englishmen his admiration was very hearty. Among the English who lived at Weimar during those days was a youth whose name is now carried in triumph wherever English Literature is cherished—William Makepeace Thackeray; and Weimar Albums still display with pride the caricatures which the young satirist sketched at that period. He has kindly enabled me to enrich these pages with a brief account of his reminiscences, gracefully sketched in the following letter:

"*London, 28th April,* 1855.

"Dear Lewes,—I wish I had more to tell you regarding Weimar and Goethe. Five-and-twenty years ago, at least a score of young English lads used to live at Weimar for study, or sport, or society; all of which were to be had in the friendly little Saxon capital. The Grand Duke and Duchess received us with the kindliest hospitality. The Court was splendid, but yet most pleasant and homely. We were invited in our turns to dinners, balls and assemblies there. Such young men as had a right, appeared in uniforms, diplomatic and military. Some, I remember, invented gorgeous clothing: the kind old Hof Marschall of those days, M. de Spiegel (who had two of the most lovely daughters eyes ever looked on), being in nowise difficult as to the admission of these young Englanders. Of the winter nights we used to charter sedan chairs, in which we were carried through the snow to those pleasant Court enter-

tainments. I for my part had the good luck to purchase Schiller's sword, which formed a part of my court costume, and still hangs in my study, and puts me in mind of days of youth the most kindly and delightful.

"We knew the whole society of the little city, and but that the young ladies, one and all, spoke admirable English, we surely might have learned the very best German. The society met constantly. The ladies of the Court had their evenings. The theatre was open twice or thrice in the week, where we assembled, a large family party. Goethe had retired from the direction, but the great traditions remained still. The theatre was admirably conducted; and besides the excellent Weimar company, famous actors and singers from various parts of Germany performed *Gastrolle** through the winter. In that winter I remember we had Ludwig Devrient in Shylock, Hamlet, Falstaff, and the *Robbers;* and the beautiful Schröder in *Fidelio.*

"After three-and-twenty years absence, I passed a couple of summer days in the well-remembered place, and was fortunate enough to find some of the friends of my youth. Madame de Goethe was there, and received me and my daughters with the kindness of old days. We drank tea in the open air at the famous cottage in the Park,† which still belongs to the family, and had been so often inhabited by her illustrious father.

"In 1831, though he had retired from the world, Goethe would nevertheless very kindly receive strangers. His daughter-in-law's tea-table was always spread for us. We passed hours after hours there, and night after night with the pleasantest talk and music. We read over endless novels and poems in French, English, and German. My delight in those days was

* What in England are called "starring engagements".

† The *Gartenhaus.*

to make caricatures for children. I was touched to find that they were remembered, and some even kept until the present time; and very proud to be told, as a lad, that the great Goethe had looked at some of them.

"He remained in his private apartments, where only a very few privileged persons were admitted; but he liked to know all that was happening, and interested himself about all strangers. Whenever a countenance struck his fancy, there was an artist settled in Weimar who made a portrait of it. Goethe had quite a gallery of heads, in black and white, taken by this painter. His house was all over pictures, drawings, casts, statues and medals.

"Of course I remember very well the perturbation of spirit with which, as a lad of nineteen, I received the long expected intimation that the Herr Geheimrath would see me on such a morning. This notable audience took place in a little ante-chamber of his private apartments, covered all round with antique casts and bas-reliefs. He was habited in a long grey or drab redingot, with a white neckcloth and a red ribbon in his buttonhole. He kept his hands behind his back, just as in Rauch's statuette. His complexion was very bright, clear and rosy. His eyes extraordinarily dark,* piercing and brilliant. I felt quite afraid before them, and recollect comparing them to the eyes of the hero of a certain romance called *Melmoth the Wanderer*, which used to alarm us boys thirty years ago; eyes of an individual who had made a bargain with a Certain Person, and at an extreme old age retained these eyes in all their awful splendour. I fancied Goethe must have been still more handsome as an old man than even in the days of his youth. His voice was very rich and sweet. He asked me

* This must have been the effect of the position in which he sat with regard to the light. Goethe's eyes were dark brown, but not very dark.

questions about myself, which I answered as best I could. I recollect I was at first astonished, and then somewhat relieved, when I found he spoke French with not a good accent.

"*Vidi tantum.* I saw him but three times. Once walking in the garden of his house in the *Frauenplan;* once going to step into his chariot on a sunshiny day, wearing a cap and a cloak with a red collar. He was caressing at the time a beautiful little golden-haired granddaughter, over whose sweet fair face the earth has long since closed too.

"Any of us who had books or magazines from England sent them to him, and he examined them eagerly. *Frazer's Magazine* had lately come out, and I remember he was interested in those admirable outline portraits which appeared for awhile in its pages. But there was one, a very ghastly caricature of Mr. R——, which, as Madame de Goethe told me, he shut up and put away from him angrily. "They would make me look like that," he said; though in truth I can fancy nothing more serene, majestic, and *healthy* looking than the grand old Goethe.

"Though his sun was setting, the sky round about was calm and bright, and that little Weimar illumined by it. In every one of those kind salons the talk was still of Art and letters. The theatre, though possessing no very extraordinary actors, was still conducted with a noble intelligence and order. The actors read books, and were men of letters and gentlemen, holding a not unkindly relationship with the *Adel.* At Court the conversation was exceedingly friendly, simple and polished. The Grand Duchess (the present Grand Duchess Dowager), a lady of very remarkable endowments, would kindly borrow our books from us, lend us her own, and graciously talk to us young men about our literary tastes and pursuits. In the respect paid

by this Court to the Patriarch of letters, there was something ennobling, I think, alike to the subject and sovereign. With a five-and-twenty years' experience since those happy days of which I write, and an acquaintance with an immense variety of human kind, I think I have never seen a society more simple, charitable, courteous, gentlemanlike than that of the dear little Saxon city, where the good Schiller and the great Goethe lived and lie buried. "Very sincerely yours,

W. M. Thackeray."

Thackeray's testimony is not only borne out by all that I learn elsewhere, but is indeed applicable to Weimar in the present day, where the English visitor is received by the reigning Grand Duke and Duchess with the same exquisite grace of courtesy; and where he still feels that the traditions of the Goethe period are *living*.

To return to Goethe: His last secretary, Kräuter, who never speaks of him but with idolatry, describes his activity even at this advanced age as something prodigious. It was moreover systematic. A certain time of the day was devoted to his correspondence; then came the arrangement of his papers, or the completion of works long commenced. One fine spring morning, Kräuter tells me Goethe said to him: "Come, we will cease dictation; it is a pity such fine weather should not be enjoyed, let us go into the Park and do a bit of work there." Kräuter took the necessary books and papers, and followed his master, who, in his long blue overcoat, a blue cap on his head, and his hands in the customary attitude behind his back, marched on, upright and imposing. Those who remember Rauch's statuette will picture to themselves the figure of the old man in its ordinary attitude; but they cannot picture to themselves the imposing effect of that Jupiter-head which, on this occasion, arrested an old peasant, and so absorbed him,

that leaning his hands upon his rake, and resting his chin upon his hands, he gazed on the magnificent spectacle in forgetfulness so complete that he did not move out of the way, but stood gazing, immoveable, while Kräuter had to step aside to pass.

It is usually said indeed that Goethe showed no signs of age; but this is one of the exaggerations which the laxity of ordinary speech permits itself. His intellect preserved a wonderful clearness and activity, as we know; and indeed the man who wrote the essay on Cuvier and Geoffroy's discussion, and who completed the *Faust* in his eighty-second year, may fairly claim a place among the Nestors for whom remains

> Some work of noble note,
> Not unbecoming men who strove with gods.

But the biographer is bound to record that in his intellect, as in his body, the old man showed unmistakeably that he was old. His hearing became noticeably impaired; his memory of recent occurrences was extremely treacherous; yet his eyesight remained strong, and his appetite good. In the later years of his life he presented a striking contrast to the earlier years, in his preference for close rooms. The heated and impure atmosphere of an unventilated room was to him so agreeable that it was difficult to persuade him to have a window opened for the purpose of ventilation. Always disliking the cold, and longing for warmth like a child of the south, he sat in rooms so heated that he was constantly taking cold. This did not prevent his enjoyment of the fresh air when he was in the country. The mountain air of Ilmenau, especially, seemed to give him health and enjoyment. It was to Ilmenau he went to escape from the festivities preparing for his last birthday. He ascended the lovely heights of the Gickelhahn, and went into the wood hut, where so many happy days had been spent with Karl August.

There he saw on the wall those lines he had years before written in pencil,—

Ueber allen Gipfeln
Ist Ruh,
In allen Wipfeln
Spürest du
Kaum einen Hauch;
Die Vögelein schweigen im Walde.
Warte nur, balde
Ruhest du auch.

And wiping the tears from his eyes, tears which rose at the memory of Karl August, Charlotte von Stein, and his own happy youth, he repeated the last line, "*Ja, warte nur, balde ruhest du auch*—Yes, wait but a little, thou too soon wilt be at rest."

That rest was nearer than any one expected. On the 16th of March following, his grandson, Wolfgang, coming into his room as usual to breakfast with him, found him still in bed. The day before, in passing from his heated room across the garden, he had taken cold. The physician on arriving, found him very feverish, with what is known in Weimar as the "nervous fever", which acts almost like a pestilence. With the aid of remedies, however, he rallied towards evening, and became talkative and jocose. On the 17th he was so much better that he dictated a long letter to W. von Humboldt. All thought of danger ceased. But during the night of the 19th, having gone off into a soft sleep, he awoke about midnight with hands and feet icy cold, and fierce pain and oppression of the chest. He would not have the physician disturbed, however, for he said there was no danger, only pain. But when the physician came in the morning, he found that a fearful change had taken place. His teeth chattered with the cold. The pain in his chest made him groan, and sometimes call out

aloud. He could not rest in one place, but tossed about in bed, seeking in vain a more endurable position. His face was ashen grey; the eyes, deep sunk in the sockets, were dull, and the glance was that of one conscious of the presence of death. After a time these fearful symptoms were allayed, and he was removed from his bed into the easy chair, which stood at his bedside. There, towards evening, he was once more restored to perfect calmness, and spoke with clearness and interest of ordinary matters; especially pleased he was to hear that his appeal for a young artist, a protégé, had been successful; and with a trembling hand, he signed an official paper which secured a pension to another artist, a young Weimar lady, for whom he had interested himself.

On the following day, the approach of death was evident. The painful symptoms were gone. But his senses began to fail him, and he had moments of unconsciousness. He sat quiet in the chair, spoke kindly to those around him, and made his servant bring Salvandy's *Seize Mois, ou la Révolution et les Révolutionnaires*, which he had been reading when he fell ill; but after turning over the leaves, he laid it down, feeling himself too ill to read. He bade them bring him the list of all the persons who had called to inquire after his health, and remarked that such evidence of sympathy must not be forgotten when he recovered. He sent every one to bed that night, except his copyist. He would not even allow his old servant to sit up with him, but insisted on his lying down to get the rest so much needed.

The following morning—it was the 22nd March 1832—he tried to walk a little up and down the room, but, after a turn, he found himself too feeble to continue. Reseating himself in the easy chair, he chatted cheerfully with Ottilie on the ap-

proaching Spring, which would be sure to restore him. He had no idea of his end being so near.

The name of Ottilie was frequently on his lips. She sat beside him, holding his hand in both of hers. It was now observed that his thoughts began to wander incoherently. "See," he exclaimed, "the lovely woman's head—with black curls—in splendid colours—a dark background!" Presently he saw a piece of paper on the floor, and asked them how they could leave Schiller's letters so carelessly lying about. Then he slept softly, and on awakening, asked for the sketches he had just seen—the sketches of his dream. In silent anguish they awaited the close now so surely approaching. His speech was becoming less and less distinct. The last words audible were: *More light!* The final darkness grew apace, and he whose eternal longings had been for more Light, gave a parting cry for it, as he was passing under the shadow of Death.

He continued to express himself by signs, drawing letters with his forefinger in the air, while he had strength, and finally, as life ebbed, drawing figures slowly on the shawl which covered his legs. At half-past twelve he composed himself in the corner of the chair. The watcher placed a finger on her lip to intimate that he was asleep. If sleep it was, it was a sleep in which a life glided from the world. He woke no more.

FINIS.

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